A COMMON THREAD

LABOR, POLITICS, AND CAPITAL MOBILITY IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

BETH ENGLISH

VISIT…

A Common Thread

POLITICS AND CULTURE IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY SOUTH

Edited by Bryant Simon and Jane Dailey

The South that could be reasonably termed "the nation's number one economic problem" in 1938 is no more. Today, the South—with its runaway economic and demographic growth, political clout, and influential cultural exports—is arguably the most dynamic region in the United States.

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A Common Thread

Labor, Politics, and Capital Mobility in the Textile Industry

BETH ENGLISH

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A Common Thread

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INTRODUCTION

"It has been said," U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan noted in advance of a September 2000 United Nations summit meeting of world leaders, "that arguing against globalization is like arguing against the laws of gravity."[1] Perhaps. Certainly, the loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States and the exodus of industrial capital to other parts of the world have spurred heated debates. Are capital relocations and related restructuring within the U.S. economy a long-term boon or bane? What is the best strategy to raise global labor standards? What are the most effective ways to mitigate the unemployment and hardships caused by downsizings and plant closures? Factory closings associated with globalization have become endemic in the United States, a phenomena described in 2002 by Steven Greenhouse of the *New York Times* as "the infection that has hit so much of industrial America."[2] Indeed, "globalization" has become a buzzword of the early twenty-first century, and its effects are a hot-button political issue. Yet while capital flight appears to be relatively new, in reality, it and the dialogue about effective strategies to deal with it have been ongoing for well over a century.

The cotton textile industry was one of the first in the United States to experience massive relocations of capital and plant closures when the center of the industry shifted from New England to the South during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Competition from textile mills operating in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama became a serious challenge for northern cotton textile manufacturers as early as the 1890s. Owners of northern textile corporations—watching profits turn into losses during the 1893 depression while output and sales of southern goods continued apace—felt unfairly constrained by state legislation that established age and hours standards for mill employees, and by actual and potential labor militancy in their mills. As a result, several New England textile manufacturers opened southern subsidiary factories as a way to effectively meet southern competition. In 1896, the Dwight Manufacturing Company of Chicopee, Massachusetts, was one of the first New England cotton textile companies to open a southern subsidiary, building a branch mill in Alabama City, Alabama. In subsequent decades, the Dwight Company worked to maintain the manufacturing advantages found there by utilizing aggressive union-busting tactics and, in conjunction with other Alabama textile manufacturers, by lobbying against and stymieing the passage of meaningful state labor legislation. The Dwight Company eventually shifted all of its production to the Alabama mill, and in 1927 it closed its Massachusetts

operations completely. Within a thirty-year period, many of the largest textile corporations in Massachusetts would move part or all of their operations southward. When southern textile companies began to feel the pinch of post–World War II competition from manufacturers operating in lower-cost, comparatively unregulated labor markets worldwide, they too began liquidating holdings and relocating capital as their New England counterparts had done at the turn of the century. In 1959, the mill in Alabama that the Dwight Manufacturing Company opened in 1896 was one of the first cotton textile mills in the South to close in the face of this postwar foreign competition.

The Dwight Manufacturing Company's relocation from Massachusetts to Alabama was an early step in the process of textile industry globalization. At the turn of the last century, this process began in the United States as region-to-region relocations and continues today from nation to nation. The owners of the Dwight Company recognized that the highest profits could be made in the underdeveloped, overwhelmingly rural South where surplus labor was abundant, opportunities for gainful employment were few, and labor was cheap and unorganized. Late nineteenth-century southern industrial boosters and many state legislators, moreover, linked the South's economic development inexorably to the maintenance of the region's low-wage, probusiness status quo, using this climate to attract the dollars of more northern investors. The Dwight Company's corporate officers were very vocal about the conditions in Massachusetts that "pushed" the company to move while other conditions in Alabama "pulled." The company's southern operations became a lightening rod for both praise and criticism by mill owners, mill village apologists, advocates of child-labor reform, and organized labor. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourse about Dwight's decision to open a subsidiary mill in Alabama and its eventual move out of Massachusetts parallels much of the modern dialogue about globalization. It historicizes and helps inform current debates about continuous relocations of capital.[3]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company provides a unique lens through which one may understand not just the factors underlying capital flight but the process by which the industrial relocation of the New England cotton textile industry occurred over time. Viewing the actions of unions, management, and the state within the context of one corporation provides an effective framework through which the dynamics of capital flight can be explored on local, state, and transregional levels simultaneously. Only by transcending narrow local and regional boundaries is it possible to fully explore the development of the southern cotton textile industry starting in the 1880s, the growth of competition between North and South beginning in the 1890s, and the precipitous decline of the New

England industry that started during the 1920s and gained momentum after World War II. By bringing together capital and labor, legislators and lobbyists, northerners and southerners into the same narrative, the Dwight Company's history serves as a much-needed "common thread" that makes possible a multifaceted understanding of the cotton textile industry's regional repositioning from the late nineteenth to the twentieth century.

Although this analysis is a study in capital mobility, it contributes to the vast and varied body of scholarly literature dealing with the histories of both the New England and Piedmont South textile industries. It disengages from the social-cultural methodology used by many historians of the U.S. textile industry that, with few exceptions, has dominated the writing of textile-related history for over twenty years. By the 1980s, a new social history began explaining the process of industrialization in New England and the New South through the experiences of textile workers themselves rather than through the activities and motivations of mill owners and industrial boosters.[4] This new social history moved beyond company studies of New England textile corporations that reflected only the view of management, beyond analyses focused on the question of who drove the establishment of the early nineteenth-century New England textile industry, and beyond studies of the ways in which textile manufacturing facilitated the industrialization of the Northeast and the United States. It also fundamentally challenged the portrayals of the turn-of-the-century "cotton mill campaign" as a grand movement led by the South's "leading citizens" motivated primarily by the goal of providing gainful employment to the region's poor whites. As this body of textile scholarship grew, it encompassed such topics as the cultures created within the early nineteenth-century Lowell boarding house system and within late nineteenth- and twentieth-century southern mill villages, workers' negotiations with management as the industry matured in both regions, and textile operatives' participation in labor militancy and unions. Social historians were focusing not just on the workplace, but also on how individuals acted within the milieu of industrial employment to create distinct attitudes and cultures that permeated the boundaries of work and extended into their homes and communities.[5]

Building on these earlier works, textile industry scholars have gone on to delve deeper into issues such as the nature of workers' power within the system of southern mill village paternalism; the ways in which various intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and religion have shaped working-class politics on local and state levels; and the question of why the South in general and its textile industry in particular have historically been the least unionized region and manufacturing sector in the United States.[6] By concentrating on individuals

and their experiences, attitudes, and actions through a variety of frameworks, these studies provide an in-depth historical understanding of those who have labored in the nation's textile mills.

However, this emphasis on worker agency and experiences reduced mill management and textile companies, at best, to minor characters in textile industry historiography.[7] Because it is impossible to fully understand the actions of one group without studying the motivations of the other, this study seeks to rejoin business and labor history through a company-centered approach, albeit one that is neither one dimensional nor overtly celebratory. This institutional focus comes at the expense of an intimate knowledge of the everyday lives of Dwight's employees in both Chicopee and Alabama City, and at the cost of silencing millhands who were not members of or in agreement with decisions made by the larger organizations. Still, it was through group action that textile workers most effectively made themselves heard by management and state politicians and were most likely to influence the overall process of capital relocation. As such, the analysis presented herein is not meant to replace studies that offer closer looks at day-to-day life, work, and shop floor interactions, but rather to complement them.[8]

This examination of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's relocation of its operations from Massachusetts to Alabama broadens the often locale- and region-specific perspective of the social-cultural studies. It also, however, adds an element of social history to existing interregional migration studies. Economic historians have used location theory to explain how cost-of-production related factors like access to raw materials, proximity to markets and transportation costs, taxes, technological development, labor supply and skill, and prevailing rates of pay facilitated the investment of capital in certain locations over others. Although interregional in their approach, location theorists' textile industry studies nevertheless have not provided substantive analyses of the impact on capital mobility of unquantifiable factors such as New England mill owners' perceptions that home legislatures were "hostile" to them, that those in the South were "friendly," and that the southern labor pool was "docile." Location theory studies, too, lack detailed investigations into the various strategies used by New England mill owners and textile unions to counteract the manufacturing advantages to be had in the South, if and how these strategies changed over time, and their short- and long-term effects.[9]

An important and integral part of this analysis is a detailed assessment of the years between 1880 and 1920, a period often ignored or glossed over in the body of historical works dealing with the deindustrialization of the New England textile industry. The majority of deindustrialization studies focus their attentions on mill closures and the strategies used by owners, unions, state legislatures, and

the federal government in their efforts to save New England's textile industry during the period between the 1920s and 1960s. By the 1920s, however, capital flight in the U.S. textile industry and its underlying causes had been realities for three decades. Without a study of the crucial time from 1880 through World War I, it is difficult to fully appreciate the nature of the relationship between the northern and southern branches of the industry and understand how the issues of wages, hours, and unionization became such key factors in New England's textile decline between the 1920s and 1960s.[10] During the years from 1880 to the end of World War I, New England's deindustrialization was not a foregone conclusion, and therefore this time period provides the best place to look for lessons to be learned from the process of capital mobility as it occurred over a century ago.

The organization of *A Common Thread* is both chronological and topical.[11] The first chapter provides a brief overview of the founding of the Dwight Manufacturing Company in 1841, its history through the Civil War, and the economic changes that facilitated the growth of the cotton textile industry in the post–Civil War South. It also examines southern industrial booster campaigns during the 1880s and 1890s, the expansion of southern textile manufacturing, and the initial responses of Massachusetts mill owners to this expansion. This chapter explains the origins of the "southern competition" with which Massachusetts manufacturers increasingly dealt through the 1890s and beyond the turn of the century. Chapter 2 probes the factors leading to the Dwight Manufacturing Company's 1894 decision to build a southern branch plant and assesses why southern competition, Massachusetts labor legislation, and labor militancy in the Dwight mills were important factors shaping the company's relocation strategy. This chapter focuses on how events and changes at the local level in Chicopee intersected with those that occurred on a statewide level in Massachusetts to create the conditions under which the owners of the Dwight Company decided to open a southern subsidiary mill.

The book's third chapter follows the Dwight Company south. It provides a complementary examination to the previous Massachusetts-focused one as it dissects the reasons why the Dwight Company chose Alabama as the state and Alabama City as the town in which it would build its branch factory. The analysis follows the construction of the Alabama City mill and mill village through the late 1890s, local reactions to the Dwight Company, and the first years of the Alabama City mill's operation. It looks as well at the ties between the northern and southern industries and how in some cases the company transferred, but in others modified, its "northern" managerial style to work effectively within the new southern environment. Chapter 4 examines the issue of regulatory legislation in the southern textile states through a discussion of the turn-of-the-

century campaigns for and against child-labor laws in Alabama. It investigates how unionists, middle-class reformers, and the owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company acted in the legislative arena, and the ways in which the issue of capital mobility became an integral part of the debates over the passage of protective legislation in the state.

The fifth chapter takes the story of the Dwight Manufacturing Company into the 1920s and to the 1927 closure of Dwight's Massachusetts mill. It pays particular attention to how changes in the textile industry during World War I, the postwar depression in textiles, union organization, and labor militancy in Dwight's Chicopee and Alabama City mills culminated in the suspension of the company's operations in Massachusetts. Chapter 6 examines the role played by Dwight's Alabama City workers in the 1934 General Textile Strike as well as the strike's failure locally, regionally, and nationally. It analyzes the immediate consequences of the strike's failure for Dwight's Alabama operatives and their counterparts in mills nationwide, as well as the strike's impact on continuing New England mill closures and relocations. Chapter 7 catalogues the ultimately successful attempt made by Dwight's production workers during the late 1930s and early 1940s to gain union recognition and a collective bargaining contract with management. It positions the organization of the Dwight local within wider attempts made by the Textile Workers Union of America to organize workers in the South, and thereby, to equalize northern and southern working conditions. The chapter carries the Dwight Company through to its 1951 merger with Cone Mills of North Carolina and explores the underlying factors of and process by which Cone management closed the Dwight mill in 1959.

Less than four decades later, Cone Mills became one of the first U.S. cotton textile companies to open production facilities in Mexico. In 2004, it announced its intention to build a branch factory and begin production in Guatemala. Cone Mills, all the while, closed plants in North and South Carolina deemed to be money-losing divisions. Between 1977 and 1990 alone, Cone Mills closed six plants and sold one.[12] Cone's 1959 shutdown of the Dwight mill in Gadsden, a factory that was itself a product of the process of capital relocation that transferred the center of the U.S. cotton textile industry from New England southward during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, thus portended this new cycle of global capital relocations and mill closures during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It is a process that can be better understood through an examination of its historical roots.

CHAPTER ONE

"Positively Alarming"

Southern Boosters, Piedmont Mills, and New England Responses

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the manufacture of cotton textile goods drove much of the industrialization of New England. In the eastern part of Massachusetts, Boston businessmen invested their monies in spinning and weaving mills along the fall lines of the Charles River in Waltham and the Merrimack River in Lowell and Lawrence. In the central part of the state, local merchants in the Chicopee-Springfield area of the Connecticut River valley did the same. Drawing a largely female workforce from an increasing surplus of agricultural labor, these entrepreneurs facilitated the creation of the region's first full-scale manufactories as well as entire communities based on cotton textile production. In Lowell, for example, a group of Boston investors that came to be known as the "Boston Associates" established the Merrimack Manufacturing Company in 1822. In 1825, they incorporated the Merrimack Lock and Canal Company, and over the next twenty years they built mills, machine shops, and company-owned boarding houses and tenements in the city. The Boston Associates eventually controlled many of the largest cotton textile manufactories in the United States, including the Boot, Tremont, Lawrence, Appleton, Suffolk, Hamilton, Massachusetts, and Prescott Mills.[1]

Simultaneously through the early 1820s, industry took root in Springfield and neighboring Chicopee. By 1820, Chicopee had a base of several small-scale industries consisting of a paper mill, iron works, and saw and grist mills, but the community remained predominantly agricultural. Between 1822 and 1823, local entrepreneurs recognized the potential of the Chicopee River, a tributary of the Connecticut River, to drive the turbines needed to operate looms and spinning machines, and they began to develop the cotton textile industry in central Massachusetts. In 1823, Springfield merchant Jonathan Dwight Sr. and investors with familial and commercial ties to his influential family incorporated the Boston Springfield Manufacturing Company. Through this company,

they purchased property and water privileges from Chicopee locals. With five hundred thousand dollars of capital stock, they began constructing a dam to harness the river for factory use, intending to build a cotton mill as well as workforce housing. The owners of the Boston Springfield Manufacturing Company, renamed the Chicopee Manufacturing Company in 1828, started work on a second mill in 1825, a third in 1826, and a fourth in 1831. By 1835, the Chicopee Manufacturing Company was capitalized at seven hundred thousand dollars.[2]

Through the 1830s, the Dwight family, by virtue of its ties to influential financiers and politicians in Boston, was instrumental not only in spearheading the construction of a railroad line connecting the Connecticut River valley and western Massachusetts to Boston but also in drawing Boston investments into Chicopee's cotton textile concerns. In 1831, eight Boston investors and five local entrepreneurs incorporated the Springfield Canal Company, which then developed the water power and constructed textile mills for three new companies downriver from the Chicopee Manufacturing Company: the Cabot Manufacturing Company (1832), the Perkins Manufacturing Company (1836), and the Dwight Manufacturing Company (1841). The Cabot and Perkins Companies merged in 1852, and then in 1856 they consolidated with the Dwight Manufacturing Company and operated under the Dwight name. In less than twenty years, Chicopee had become one of the Bay State's foremost industrial centers.[3]

The owners of the Chicopee companies, like other New England textile manufacturers in the 1820s and 1830s, filled their mills with a workforce of farm girls attracted to the factories by the opportunity to earn cash wages. During the 1840s, mill owners began employing English and Irish immigrants in the city's mills, and later they culled their operatives from successive waves of French Canadian, Polish, and Greek and Portuguese workers as they began arriving in Massachusetts in the 1860s, 1880s, and early 1900s, respectively. As the ethnic makeup of the workforce of the Chicopee textile mills changed through the mid- to late nineteenth century, so too did its gender composition. The workforce shifted from consisting almost exclusively of native female labor to an immigrant population of both men and women. Local businesses that provided needed services for the Chicopee community grew during these years as well, and mill owners living in Boston invested funds to aid in the establishment of city schools, libraries, parks, public services, and utilities.[4]

The outbreak of the Civil War accelerated Chicopee's industrial development. Local machine works and facilities that previously made consumer goods operated on augmented schedules and expanded for the purposes of manufacturing war materials and supplies. Production in the city's cotton mills, however, nearly ceased. Without regular shipments of southern cotton, the mills could not maintain full operations. Mill owners sold most of their raw cotton stocks

at huge profits and slashed their workforces and outputs. With an eye on more efficient production and higher profits after the war's end, the owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company and the Chicopee Manufacturing Company used the wartime mill shutdowns as an opportunity to update machinery and install auxiliary steam engines that would power the factories when Connecticut River waters ran low. As late as 1864, the Dwight Company employed only four hundred workers. But by 1869, the company had doubled its 1860 productive capacity and reemployed over fifteen hundred of its prewar workforce of sixteen hundred operatives.[5]

While the Dwight Manufacturing Company and other Massachusetts textile firms returned to full production schedules through the late 1860s, southerners looked for ways to recover from the devastation wrought by the Civil War and to function within a changing regional economic system now based on free labor. As southerners negotiated this new economic terrain, voices emerged that urged the region to focus on diversified agriculture and industrialization as the means through which the South could rebuild and revitalize itself. "All of you will recall the story that [Henry W.] Grady told on one occasion in setting forth what advantage it would be to inaugurate manufactories here," remarked former Southern Cotton Spinners Association president Daniel Augustus Tompkins in 1901. "He said that he attended a funeral in North Georgia, where the grave was dug through solid marble, and yet the marble slab at the head of the grave came from Vermont, that surrounded by a forest of splendid hard wood, yet the coffin came from Cincinnati, that on the hillsides was the best grazing for sheep, yet the shroud came from New England, that while the iron ore was within hearing distance, yet the pick and tools for digging the grave came from Pittsburgh; that all that Georgia furnished for that funeral, was a hole in the ground and a corpse." But, Tompkins declared, "today this condition has so far changed."[6] In fact, within a decade of Henry Grady's 1889 "funeral oration" and his call for the development of industries based on regional resources, manufacturing and extractive industries had taken root in the states of the Piedmont South.

When the Civil War ended, the southern economy and landscape were in ruins. With Dixie's defeat, many southerners saw industrialization as a necessary step toward modernizing and reintegrating the overwhelmingly rural region into an increasingly urban-industrial nation. This New South mantra tied the region's post–Civil War economic recovery and future prosperity to industrialization, and nowhere was it more visible than in cotton textile manufacturing. The textile industry and the postwar South proved a perfect match. Cotton was abundant in the region and textile mill capitalization and start-up costs were relatively low. Piedmont rivers, streams, and coalfields, moreover, could

provide the power to run textile machinery, while widespread construction of southern railroads would aid in transporting raw materials and manufactured goods. Potential mill operatives, too, were readily available. By the 1880s, many New South entrepreneurs embraced the region's "cotton mill campaign," believing in earnest that textiles would be the salvation of the South and, as had happened in New England fifty years earlier, would be a seed from which other, diversified industries would grow.[7]

Through the 1870s, railroad construction in the South had skyrocketed, linking the region to national markets and providing the transportation infrastructure necessary for the success of future commercial enterprises. Boosters for this "New South" looked to railroad building, funded in large part by northern investors, as the first step in reorienting the region's economy toward commercial agriculture, developing natural resources, and establishing manufacturing industries. "There are vast mineral, timber, and agricultural reserves as yet totally undeveloped—their extent and richness being only partly comprehended," noted one industrial promoter in the pages of the *Manufacturers' Record*. "As new [rail]roads are built, opening up to the world these immense sources of wealth, outside capital will be drawn to the development of the South in even greater abundance than at present." Extensive railroad building occurred in the South during the 1870s, but the ongoing instability and reordering of the southern political, social, and economic structure, as well as the national economic depression that began in 1873, hindered the development of other regional industries. New South industrial boosters, nevertheless, continued to link regional regeneration with the establishment of local factories that would turn raw agricultural products and natural resources into unfinished goods.[8]

When recovery from the depression started in 1879, increasing numbers of southerners began investing in the development of local cotton textile mills, adding to the region's antebellum mills and cotton manufactories established immediately after the war that survived the 1873 depression. New South entrepreneurs facilitated an expansion of the southern textile industry through the 1880s on a scale that was much larger and more widespread than any previous cotton-mill construction. Northeastern textile machine companies and commission houses extended credit to these entrepreneurs in exchange for stock subscriptions in the new mills. Although this helped fund the construction of textile mills in the Piedmont South, local monies fueled much of the region's postwar mill-building activity. In fact, historians estimate that 75 to 90 percent of the spindles operating in the South during the 1880s and 1890s were southern owned.[9]

This degree of local investment made the mill expansions fundamentally different from the postwar development of southern railroads and the region's

mining and lumber industries, all of which were facilitated by direct investments of northern and western capital. Southern businessmen and town professionals, merchants, and large landowners all funneled substantial sums of money into local textile manufactories. "The factory is a good specimen of how things are working for us," Richard Edmonds, editor of the *Manufacturers' Record* asserted. "It is the conception of a Southern brain, built with Southern money on Southern soil. . . . Such achievements carry their own lesson, they speak loudly of Southern progress."[10] Southern mill owners became symbols of the New South. The success of their manufacturing enterprises represented progress, regional renewal through industry, and the creation of a new economic order.

Postwar agricultural transformations played a central part in the late nineteenth-century development of the South's textile industry. The war fundamentally altered the production on small, white-owned farms throughout the Piedmont South. Before the war, upcountry farmers focused their energies on subsistence-based, diversified agriculture. They were self-sufficient in grains, fruits, vegetables, and livestock. Farmers often bartered for goods or services needed to meet basic household needs. The war, however, plunged farmers into debt, and the cost of reconstructing buildings and replenishing livestock lost during the war drew them toward cash crops like cotton and tobacco. Merchants demanded cash crops as security for loans of seed and supplies. By the 1870s, overproduction and falling crop prices resulted. Many upcountry farming families found themselves trapped in a cycle of debt and dependency that forced them to abandon diversified farming, a step that often led to the loss of land ownership. In 1880, at least one-third of the white farmers in the Piedmont South were tenants renting the land on which they worked. By 1900, this proportion increased to one-half.[11]

The growth of the post–Civil War southern cotton textile industry was tied to these white southerners who saw in mill work an opportunity for steady employment and economic stability. These upcountry farmers created a vast supply of cheap labor that did not need prior experience or a lengthy period of training to work as unskilled textile mill operatives. As farming families in New England realized during the first decades of the nineteenth century, farming families in the Piedmont during the last decades of the century also found that the labor of a household's women and children was worth more in a local textile mill than on the land. Members of these families entered the mills with the intention of earning wages that might keep a farm viable or support a household with "public" work when the land no longer provided. Sending surplus labor into mills to earn cash wages was a strategy to maintain familial self-sufficiency and an insulation from debt, poverty, tenancy, and destitution in the emergent

postbellum economy. For potential industrialists, the establishment of cotton textile mills made sense precisely because they had to cull their workforce from among this overwhelmingly rural, unskilled labor pool. This ample supply of labor made possible the rapid development of the South's cotton textile industry through the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The transition of poor whites from farms to factories throughout the Piedmont South continued into the early 1890s as cotton prices continued to fall and as the construction of textile mills accelerated.[12]

"Employment must be created for those who are willing and anxious to work, but have no work to do," Richard Edmonds argued. "[T]his can in no way be done to better advantage and with more profitable results to the capitalist who invests his money . . . and to the many people thus furnished with employment," he continued, "than by building cotton mills." Through the 1880s and 1890s local and regional industrial boosters like Edmonds extolled the virtues of expanding the South's cotton textile industry, which, presumably, would revitalize local economies, provide a home-market for cotton grown throughout the region, and offer employment to poor whites. These promoters of the region's cotton mill campaign touted the construction of textile manufactories as philanthropic endeavors. Bostonian Curtis Guild Jr. told members of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association at an 1897 meeting that "Southern labor . . . is good labor, and the scarcity of money makes any employment paid for in cash highly popular. The mill owner in the South is not regarded as an enemy but as a benefactor."[13]

Part and parcel to the cultivation of the image of southern cotton-mill owners as altruists was the creation and maintenance of a social prescription that made textile mill work an employment option for whites only. The region's textile manufacturers and cotton-mill promoters, who themselves were overwhelmingly white, made maintaining the racial status quo a basic element of their booster rhetoric and of their cultivation of the image of mill owner as philanthropist. Mill owners and boosters tapped into many poor whites' racial fears that the abolition of slavery meant direct competition with free blacks in agriculture and industry and the potential disruption of traditional patterns of white supremacy. They also attempted to assuage anxieties that the creation of a large industrial population would engender class conflict and instability in the region. Manufacturers and industrial boosters claimed that mill work would not engender class hostilities as has occurred in northern mills. They argued instead that industrial employment in cotton textile mills owned and operated by the region's "leading citizens" would help the South's poor whites to reintegrate themselves into the regional economy in a meaningful way and facilitate their escape from "degrading" competition with black farm labor. Mill owners

said they would actually mitigate class conflict between themselves and their employees by hiring only white operatives and thereby strengthening common bonds of race between management and millhands. The local and regional press characterized southern cotton-mill owners as civic-minded businessmen whose primary motivation was not making profits, but instead, creating a means of gainful employment for dispossessed white farmers. In doing so, the southern economy could be rebuilt without creating class antagonisms or undermining the region's prevailing racial norms.[14]

Through their public pronouncements, the southern press and industrial boosters generated interest, support, and excitement for the construction of cotton mills, the establishment of an industrial base, and the creation of jobs for poor whites throughout the region. "The wide-awake, progressive people of the South are fast realizing that the prosperity of Southern cities depends on manufactures," announced the *Manufacturers' Record*, adding that "[t]hey see wherever manufactures flourish all branches of trade are prosperous." These promoters also broadcast to industrialists throughout the country the South's intention to become the leading manufacturing region in the United States. "The war destroyed the capital and property of the South . . . and left in its wake a grinding poverty, not understandable except by those whose fate it was to have passed through it," said North Carolinian T. C. Guthrie after the turn of the century. He continued, "[I]t is not surprising that it has developed men of strong characters; it is not surprising that it has developed men of ability; and it is not surprising that more or less of them saw the grand opportunity in the manufacture of cotton." Men like Guthrie were integral to the creation of an image of a phoenixlike New South rising from the ashes of the old. Certainly, they meant to convey this image to northern audiences as much as to southern ones. Booster rhetoric suggested that the South had seen the error of its ways, was now a region led by men with an outlook fundamentally different from that of the old planter elite, and was standing ready to embrace an economic plan based on industrialization and diversified agriculture. According to southern booster D. A. Tompkins, those who clung to "the idea that for a Southern man there is no occupation but raising cotton with negro labor" would be destined to "grow poorer day by day . . . until the most tenacious of them pass out of life."[15]

Through the 1880s and into the 1890s, regional boosters opined that this New South would use the textile industry as an instrument through which the region would return to a dominant position in the economy of the United States. "We have served notice that the South is not only to be the source of the world's best cotton supply, but that it must wear the double crown of cotton production and cotton manufacture," claimed booster Charles Collier in 1895, adding that

"[w]e are in this race for every prize that can be won."[16] Southern industrial spokesmen crafted a message that both threatened and enticed New England textile manufacturers, and in doing so, laid down a gauntlet for them.

On one hand, the boosters aggressively advertised the region's manufacturing "advantages" and emphasized the fact that these would surely undermine New England's textile manufacturing dominance. "The enormous increase in the number of spindles in the Southern States . . . is positively alarming," contended Richard Edmonds, and "the natural advantages of the South for the manufacture of cotton are so great as compared with the Northeast . . . many of the mills in the latter district will have to shut down permanently." But, on the other hand, southern industrial promoters also made clear that they welcomed the investment of northern capital in the development of the cotton manufacturing industry below the Mason-Dixon Line. "Nothing can prevent her growth," the booster press asserted, "but it is for the North alone to determine what share or part she will take in Southern development."[17]

New Englanders' first comprehensive introduction to the progress of the South's textile industry, its likely future growth, and the profitable production potential in the region came in 1881 at the Atlanta International Cotton Exposition. Organized to showcase the region's postwar agricultural and industrial prowess, the exposition proved itself a vehicle through which prospective northern textile investors saw for themselves the opportunities open to businessmen who invested their monies in southern manufactories. The exposition provided a platform to demonstrate that southern-made textile goods were of a quality that could compete successfully in the marketplace with those produced in New England. Indeed, historians since have noted that the exposition was a key factor in the timing of the acceleration of the South's cotton textile industry growth during the early 1880s, as it generated interest in the South's cotton textile industry and facilitated investments both from inside and outside of the region. "I am willing to say here that I have been compelled to change my views very materially on the chance of the Southern manufacturer being rather more of a competitor than we are anxious to have," reported one member of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association upon his return from the exposition. Although expressing his optimism that "there is room enough" in existing markets for the output from New England and the newly established southern mills, the NECMA delegate cautioned that it would be "from such mills at such points that we may expect competition on coarse goods, and at a very early day." The New England industry press recognized as well the potential impact of southern competition. Boston's *Commercial Bulletin* observed in 1881 that textile mills operating in the Piedmont South "have proven very profitable," adding that "it is wise for us to take advantage of the new conditions."[18]

Southern industrial boosters continued to advertise the region's economic progress and attract the attention of potential northern textile industry investors through the press and additional expositions, including the Piedmont Exposition in 1887 and the Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895. In 1895 as well, the *Manufacturers' Record* published a special supplement to its paper to promote the advantages for industrial enterprises to be found in the South, stating a goal of sending a copy of the report to "each director of every cotton mill in New England."[19] In pursuing would-be investors, southern manufacturers and their supporters in the region's press emphasized location as one of the key advantages of producing cotton textiles in the Piedmont South. Industrial promoters posited that making cotton goods in the South cost less than in the Northeast because of the region's warm climate, which translated into lower heating expenditures. Superior water resources and ample local coal supplies also provided low-cost power for machinery.

Likewise, boosters emphasized the logic of establishing textile mills where the raw cotton was grown. "Bring the cotton mills to the cotton fields" became a rallying cry of the South's industrialization campaign. "Cotton goods for Northern mills having to pass through so many hands and be sent over long lines of railroads, makes the raw material expensive before it reaches the spindles," Richard Edmonds noted, "which makes a great difference in the cost of manufacturing goods." Of course, the distance to northern bleacheries, dyeworks, and New York and Boston selling agents largely cancelled out the South's advantages of proximity to cotton and lower fuel costs.[20] Rhetorically, nonetheless, southern boosters asserted cotton manufacturing in the South was inherently "natural" by virtue of location, resources, and climate. Inevitably, they said, the region would supplant textile production in New England.

Southern industrial promoters paid the most attention, by far, to advertising the attributes of the region's labor pool. Boosters characterized southern labor as cheap, docile, and native. According to the region's spokespersons, this triumvirate was the biggest manufacturing advantage that the South had over New England. "Of the advantages of the South . . . it is almost needless to speak. Probably the most important consideration in the estimation of mill men is the labor," Richard Edmonds emphasized to members of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association in 1895. "The South has an abundant supply of the very best help from which to secure its operatives," he continued, " . . . and as a class [they] are anxious to find work and willing to accept much lower wages than northern operatives are compelled to have in order to live." After the expense of raw cotton, labor costs were the single largest expenditure in the manufacture of textile goods, constituting an estimated one-quarter of production costs. The lower wages paid to southern millhands, therefore, was a significant

benefit to southern industrialists trying to compete with established New England firms. Lower labor costs were also an extremely attractive selling point for southerners attempting to lure northern investments to the region.[21]

Southern manufacturers and the booster press argued that it was possible to pay southern operatives lower wages than their New England peers because of the lower costs of southern living, especially in the areas of fuel and housing, resulting from the region's milder climate. Lower skill and productivity levels of the southern millhands who had been recently recruited into the industrial workforce, moreover, mandated wage rates well below those paid to northern operatives. The effects of warmer weather and skill levels on southern millhand wages, however, paled in relation to the effect of the limited economic diversification of the region. In the Northeast, cotton textile manufacturers had to pay their operatives more than those in the South because of the availability of other industrial employment in the region. While textile workers remained among the lowest paid workers in New England through the turn of the century, their real wages ranged from 20 to 50 percent higher than southern operatives, whose opportunities for paid factory work were extremely limited.[22]

As the southern cotton mill campaign continued through the 1880s and early 1890s, the wages paid to southern textile mill operatives remained closely linked to the abundance of surplus agricultural labor and the prevailing low levels of pay for those who continued to work the land. The textile industry in the Piedmont South did not prove to be the engine for rapid, diversified development and overall economic growth that many New South boosters had predicted. As late as 1900, only 6 percent of the southern labor force worked in manufacturing establishments. Piedmont mill owners did not use their textile dividends to fund alternative industrial pursuits but, instead, largely reinvested them into cotton textile production, which had proven to be a moneymaker. Without the widespread presence of industries in the region, especially those employing skilled workers, there was little competition for workers from among the existing labor pool and nothing to force an increase in the wages paid to textile millhands. The South's economy continued to rely on staple crop cultivation and the production of raw materials into simple manufactured goods like coarse cotton textiles. This kept wages low.[23]

Although mill owners could have employed black operatives at an even lower cost than whites, few southern industrialists deviated from the regional norm dictating that white labor would tend machinery. However, these mill owners were influenced by more than the booster rhetoric characterizing the textile industry as an economic haven for the South's poor whites. Antebellum southern mill owners usually used white labor in their mills because it was less costly to employ workers than to buy a slave workforce. After the war, this hiring practice

often simply took advantage of the local economic transformations that created a large pool of cheap, white labor. White mill owners and millhands alike, moreover, embraced the southern social prescriptions that dictated that white women and girls, who constituted a majority of the region's textile workforce by the late nineteenth century, could not be employed in the same rooms as black men.[24]

Racial prejudices and assumptions about the capabilities of white and black workers also determined patterns of postwar textile mill employment. "I do not think that the negro will ever be able to work in cotton mills, because . . . he has not the intelligence," argued one Alabama mill superintendent. "I use them around the yard and driving the teams, and for this they are well qualified as they have more physical strength than a white man and can do more manual work." Another southern manufacturer said that "the cotton mills of the South must depend entirely on intelligent, skilled, and well-paid white labor for their future prosperity" because "the negro is a natural farmer and in no sense qualified for the exactions of tending the loom or spinning frame." Even during times like the late 1890s and the first years of the twentieth century, when cotton prices increased and white labor became more difficult to secure, southern textile manufacturers did little more than engage in discussions about the possibility of introducing black labor into their factories. Individual mill owners hired black workers to work as custodians and to load and unload goods in the mill yards and warehouses. Still, they acknowledged the likelihood of conflict between themselves and their white millhands should they employ black operatives. Indeed, in an 1893 survey conducted by the *Manufacturers' Record* on the feasibility of employing black labor in southern textile mills, a majority of the respondents stated that the fundamental issue preventing them from tapping into this additional workforce was the fact that their white operatives would not work in an integrated factory setting.[25]

Cheap, plentiful white labor was not the only foundation upon which southern textile manufacturers built their mills. Neither was it the only labor-related selling point used by the South's industrial boosters to attract northern investments to the Piedmont. Regional promoters also characterized this southern workforce as "docile" and "tractable." In their portrayals, the men, women, and children who flocked to the southern textile mills were members of impoverished farming families who were happy to have waged work of any kind and grateful for the pay and housing their altruistic employers offered to them. In the boosters' depictions, they were simple, hardworking folk who, despite their rural backgrounds, could be quickly trained into a capable industrial workforce. "They are the healthiest and happiest lot of operatives that I have ever seen, and, they go singing to their work. . . . When I saw this I asked myself what chance a

New England mill would have in competition with an institution having such advantages," the *Manufacturers' Record* quoted a New Yorker as saying in 1891. Relations between labor and capital in the South, industrial spokespersons argued, were not beset by the conflicts and tensions found in other industrialized regions. They contended that because southern operatives were "contented in their work and pay," the conditions in which labor unionism flourished in other parts of the country were nonexistent. "The operatives are docile and obedient so long as they are well treated," the editor of the *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior* noted. "They may be compared to a proud, mettlesome, and prancing young horse, who if rightly trained and treated kindly will prove a valuable and useful burden bearer."[26]

Southern industrial promoters also emphasized the paucity of immigrant workers, who, in their estimation, were always less tractable. Commonalities of race, the philanthropic intentions of mill owners, and the boon of waged work for poverty-stricken farming families assured that labor-capital conflicts would be few. The South's regional boosters argued that New England textile operatives were primarily immigrants and children of immigrants who, by virtue of their ethnicity, were more prone to instigate conflict with management and strike than were these native-born southern operatives who descended from "superior stock." Richard Edmonds observed in 1889 that "[n]o one thing is of greater moment in the progress of the South than the fact that all labor is native labor." Southern manufacturer E. W. Thomas echoed Edmonds' sentiments over a decade later, adding, "[O]ur people are, as a class, native born, proverbially religious, having an inborn inclination to be loyal to their employer, honest and capable." He predicted that "as long as our mills are filled with our own native-born employees, just so long will we be free from labor disturbances." Increasingly beset by labor-management strife during the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, New England textile manufacturers paid particular attention to this message that southern manufacturers were free from class conflict because of the native-born labor pool from which they drew their workers. "[I]n marked contrast to that of the heterogeneous foreign horde which fills the spinning and weave rooms of the Northern mill," the New England industry press noted, southern millhands were "of native American stock, hardy from generations of hill and mountain life. . . . The labor agitator is distinctly frowned upon and the independent character of the help is not favorable to the trade union idea."[27]

New Englanders' received a steady stream of information from industrial boosters about the manufacturing advantages to be had in the Piedmont South and the significant competitive threat posed by these southern cotton textile

mills. Their reactions to the southerners' claims fell along a wide spectrum, and responses ranged from outright denials that the South could successfully produce cotton textiles let alone challenge New England's supremacy in the industry, to acceptance of the fact that southern competition was real and an actuality that must be taken seriously. "I think the greatest competition that exists between New England and the South is rather in the newspaper than in the mill," R. M. Miller Jr. asserted to fellow members of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association, adding "I really do not think there is any competition—any serious competition." The *Boston Advertiser*, however, took a much more pessimistic view, noting that in the South, "conditions are exceptionally favorable for the manufacture of cotton goods," creating a situation in which "the North cannot hold out long against Southern competition." Even so, most New England manufacturers rejected such optimistic and pessimistic extremes and instead ascribed to the position that southern competition was indeed a reality but that the South would never undermine New England's textile preeminence. "The change, if it comes, will come slowly," argued a New Englander in the pages of the *Providence Railroad Journal.* A. M. Gooddale of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association concurred, admitting that southern "advantages are numerous," but that "we of New England will still stay in business." Yet, even as New England and southern textile manufacturers addressed one another in a spirit of friendly competition, a North-South war of words continued into the turn of the century among these northern industrialists, regional trade newspapers, and southern boosters over whether or not the South was destined to put an early end to New England's reign over the American cotton textile industry.[28]

The numbers of spindles in the Piedmont South increased from slightly over thirty-two thousand in 1870 to over four million by 1900, and the number of southern millhands grew nearly tenfold during the same time period. Yet in spite of the impressive expansion of the industry in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama through the 1880s and 1890s, the center of the cotton textile manufacturing industry in the United States remained firmly entrenched in New England.[29] Throughout the South, textile mills remained smaller than their New England counterparts and little vertical integration occurred between the manufacturing and finishing of the products made there. In fact, the output of the majority of southern mills remained too limited to support on-site finishing facilities and well into the 1900s these goods continued to be sent to northern finishing plants, bleacheries, and dyeworks for final processing.[30] The reality for New England textile manufacturers, nonetheless, was that southern cotton textile production continued to grow in leaps and bounds and southern-made

cotton goods had begun to be a significant presence in the domestic and foreign marketplaces. By the depression years of the 1890s, many New England textile manufacturers, including those at the Dwight Manufacturing Company in Chicopee, Massachusetts, observed the impact that southern competition had on their profits and started in earnest to look for ways to effectively counteract the manufacturing advantages to be had by those producing textiles below the Mason-Dixon Line.

CHAPTER TWO

"Manufacturers Surely Cannot Be Expected to Continue"

Legislation, Labor, and Depression

"For some days the newspapers have been filled with accounts of the investments of large sums of money in the far South by the great cotton-mill corporations of New England. . . . And thus the States of the South . . . will soon witness the greatest activity in cotton milling ever known in the history of this country," wrote Carter Glass, owner and editor of the *Lynchburg News* in 1895. "They said their object in coming South is to get away from the meddlesome and restrictive laws enacted at the instigation of 'walking delegates' and lazy agitators. Their hope is to get among conservative people who want work and so [do] not hamper and hinder great enterprises."[1] Glass's short editorial boiled down two of the motives behind capital flight in the Massachusetts textile industry at the turn of the century: organized labor in the mills and "restrictive laws," often passed at the behest of unionized operatives, which regulated working hours, employee ages and education standards, and workplace safety conditions.

In 1880, Massachusetts cotton manufacturers looked forward with optimism to a long and lucrative future for their New England mills. But, as southern competition in the industry became a force with which to reckon during the depression of the 1890s, Massachusetts mill owners perceived themselves to be besieged by burdensome and unfair labor laws and regulations. Organized labor in Massachusetts praised proreform state politicians for "being fittingly concerned with the needs of our factory people" and for their ongoing attention to regulatory legislation. Massachusetts textile manufacturers, however, blasted the state's system of labor laws and "labor demagogues," saying that they drove textile investments out of the state and pushed mill owners "to the wall."[2] Ultimately, Massachusetts public policy, as well as conflict between textile manufacturers and organized labor, would be key factors in the Dwight Manufacturing Company's decision to build a cotton textile mill in the Piedmont South.

Massachusetts was one of the nation's first industrialized states, and as such, it was also a leader in enacting state regulations for manufacturing businesses. As early as the 1820s, organized workers in Massachusetts spearheaded efforts to convince members of the Bay State's legislature to pass labor laws. Massachusetts's labor laws did not apply to all wage earners in the state equally, and compliance with regulatory statutes varied from place to place and industry to industry. Nevertheless, by the turn of the century, Massachusetts arguably had the most rigorous and detailed system of industrial legislation and enforcement of any state in the nation.

Spurred on by calls from workingmen's groups to regulate the employment of children, the Massachusetts Senate launched an investigation in 1825 into child labor in the state's manufacturing industries in order to determine how many children were employed, what their hours of labor were, and how these working hours affected their ability to attend school. The Senate investigation found that there were large numbers of children employed in the state, overwhelmingly in the textile industry, and that they worked from sunup to sunset. Although the investigating committee concluded that working such long hours from a very young age was neither conducive to nor allowed the majority of children employed in factories to get an education, the committee did not recommend legislative action as a solution.[3]

Organized workers in Massachusetts continued to call for hours and ages legislation for another decade. The General Assembly revisited the issues of child labor, working hours, and education in 1836, when the Committee on Education in the House of Representatives conducted another study. The report issued at the conclusion of the investigation argued that because of the rapid change in Massachusetts employment from agricultural to industrial labor, it became "the solemn and indispensable duty of the representatives of the people to provide . . . that those institutions which have given New England her peculiar character for general intelligence and virtue be not changed with the changing employment of her people."[4]

Based on the committee's report and recommendations, the Massachusetts legislature enacted a child-labor law in 1836. The statute mandated that, under penalty of a fifty-dollar fine, no child under fifteen years old could be employed in a manufacturing establishment without attending school for at least three months of the preceding year. Although the 1836 law included no enforcement provisions whatsoever, it was the first labor law in the Commonwealth. In 1842, the legislature, in the first formal action taken on the issue of hours regulation, amended the act to limit to ten hours the workday for children under twelve years old employed in manufacturing establishments. Over the course of the next five decades, state legislators amended and passed new child-labor acts. By

1898, Massachusetts child-labor statutes outlawed the employment of youths under the age of fourteen years in factories, workshops, and mercantile establishments; mandated thirty weeks of school attendance each year for employees fourteen to sixteen years old; and required school and age certificates to be filed with an employer for all workers under sixteen years old as proof of compliance. Enforcement of the provisions rested with a team of ten state factory inspectors and local truant officers. Employers or parents found in violation of any stipulation of the acts faced fifty-dollar fines for each infraction.[5]

Boston artisans, workingmen's groups, and textile operatives throughout Massachusetts also agitated for regulatory legislation applicable to adult workers during the early nineteenth century. By the 1840s, the largest segment of industrial workers in Massachusetts were operatives employed in the state's textile industry, and they became the most vocal proponents for the limitation of working hours by state law. Through the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, millhands in Massachusetts textile centers, including workers at the Dwight Manufacturing Company, attempted to curb working hours, prevent wage cuts, and mitigate increasingly burdensome workloads through sporadic walkouts. The use of strikes continued into the 1850s, but the failure of these workplace protests to yield tangible change led operatives to seek state-legislated relief. Throughout the decade, mill workers from large and small textile towns throughout the state sent petitions to the Massachusetts legislature calling for a law limiting the working hours in the state's cotton mills to ten per day.[6]

In addition to local organizations of textile operatives, the groups spearheading the Ten Hour Movement from 1844 to 1846 included the New England Workingmen's Association, the Lowell Mechanics and Laborers Association that included Lowell "factory girls," and the Female Labor Reform Association, renamed the New England Labor Reform League in 1846. The barrage of ten-hour petitions led the legislature to appoint an investigatory committee in 1845 to hear testimony relating to the issue of reducing working hours for adults. In their appearances before the 1845 hours committee, millhands from throughout Massachusetts told of the work conditions and the quality of life for those laboring in the textile industry, noting the ill effects, both physical and intellectual, of working eleven to thirteen hours a day in dimly lit, poorly ventilated mills. Members of the legislative committee also visited several textile mill towns in the Commonwealth, observing at each the environment to be found there and hearing the opinions of mill managers about the hours regulation issue. At the end of the investigation, the committee recommended that the legislature take no action on the subject because they found no compelling evidence that the length of the working day or the working conditions that existed in cotton mills were overtly harmful to operatives. Another committee convened to study the

hours issue again in 1846 said, too, that the General Assembly should take no legislative action.[7]

Although members of the General Assembly periodically revisited the hours reduction question, nearly three decades passed before Massachusetts legislators enacted a statute limiting the workday in textile mills to ten hours. In the intervening years, the average workday for operatives in mills throughout the state continued to be eleven to twelve hours. The Dwight Company's workweek in 1852, for instance, was seventy-five hours from May through August, sixty-seven and a half hours from September through October, and sixty-six hours from November to April. Following the lead of mills in Lowell, the Dwight Company subsequently instituted a six-day, sixty-six hour weekly schedule that included breaks each work day that lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour. With the exception of the slowdowns during the Civil War, Dwight employees continued to work eleven-hour days through the early 1870s. Operatives continued their agitation for a ten-hour law and mill owners stood firm in their opposition to it.[8]

The legislature again appointed investigative committees in 1865 and 1866 but took no action on the hours matter. Textile workers who were members of craft-based unions led a revived push for a ten-hour law beginning in 1870. These textile workers were overwhelmingly male and represented mulespinners, loomfixers, and weavers. Mulespinners and loomfixers were typically the highest paid and most skilled of the textile labor force. They also were the best organized. Their skill and the control they had in deciding who would or would not be taught the crafts gave them a significant amount of power in bargaining with management on issues of wages and working conditions. Weavers were semiskilled operatives but gained their on-the-job power through their numbers. Weavers usually constituted one-third of the workforce of a cotton textile mill. By removing themselves from the production process, weavers could effectively shut down an entire mill.[9]

The organization of textile workers along craft and skill lines, however, limited the numbers of workers who were members of unions during the late nineteenth century. Throughout the industry, craft solidarity had the effect of limiting formal organization of unskilled workers, especially immigrants and women. Craft solidarity also circumscribed to a small number the bargaining power, economic benefits, and autonomy that institutional unionization afforded. Yet precisely because these unions were male-dominated institutions and their members could and did vote as a bloc in textile centers throughout Massachusetts, they were able to function effectively in the legislative arena during the late nineteenth century as a special interest group and the de facto representative of all textile workers. The benefits that organized members enjoyed on

the shop floor rarely, if ever, extended to unorganized workers within the mills. But the lobbying activities of textile union members and their votes proved essential to securing the passage of regulatory laws that set standards applicable to all textile workers throughout the state, regardless of skill, ethnicity, or gender.[10]

Knowing that a majority of politicians in the Massachusetts legislature objected to any use of state action that would infringe on an individual's freedom of contract, during the 1870s the organized textile workers shifted their objective from a ten-hour law for all employees of Bay State manufactories, to one calling for the state regulation of working hours for women and children only. They crafted an argument that the state had not only a right but also a duty to protect those who presumably could not protect themselves, like women and children facing physical and social degradation by working long hours in textile mills. For many legislators on Beacon Hill, the dependency argument was one they could support without betraying their belief in a *man's* right to sell or buy labor as he saw fit. The male textile unionists who lobbied at the statehouse, as well as the manufacturers who fought against them, well understood that even by changing the focus of hours legislation to women and children only, the effect would essentially be the same. Because of the preponderance of women and young people working in the textile industry, no mills could function without them. Any law regulating their working hours would, by necessity, impact all textile operatives.[11]

Legislators representing mill districts introduced ten-hour bills into the General Assembly in 1871, 1872, and 1873 that would limit the hours of work to ten per day and sixty per week for women and all persons under the age of eighteen employed by manufacturing establishments that made cotton, woolen, jute, or silk fabrics. The overwhelming majority of these legislators were labor politicians aligned with the Republican Party. They forged a coalition with other Republicans in the General Assembly who, although not prolabor, viewed the reduction of hours as a social justice issue and an issue the state had a right and duty to do something about.[12] Their attempts to secure passage, however, failed. Representatives supporting the interests of mill owners complained of a "growing tendency of our state to discriminate against capital." George Nye, agent of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's mill in Chicopee, submitted a letter to the legislature stating his opposition to the proposed ten-hour law. Other mill managers and owners warned the politicians supporting the ten-hour restriction that "there was a growing feeling among capitalists in Massachusetts that their rights no longer commanded that full respect which was once accorded them," leading manufacturers to "withdraw money from our corporate institutions and send it elsewhere for investment."[13] The bills passed the House each year but were regularly defeated in the industry-friendly Senate. A majority of

Senators called, instead, for voluntary hours restrictions throughout the New England industry so as to prevent placing Massachusetts mills at a competitive disadvantage. Ten-hour agitators blamed the consistent failure of the bills on agents hired by the largest textile concerns in Massachusetts and charged that these lobbyists secured the defeat of the bills "not by argument, not by facts, but by treachery, by bribery, by intimidation, and by corruption."[14]

Opposition to the law waned in the Senate with the addition of a compromise amendment that included the words "willful violation" in the penalty clause of the 1874 ten-hour bill, making enforcement of the statute virtually impossible. The 1874 bill, which covered workers in all Massachusetts manufacturing establishments and allowed readjustments of the daily hour maximums so that a half-day could be worked on Saturdays, passed. With the signature of Governor William Washburn, the ten-hour bill became law over continued protestations from textile manufacturers that an hours law would place them at a disadvantage with the rest of New England where such restrictions did not exist. The 1874 act "for the protection of the health of a large class of women of the State, and for the advancement of education among the children of . . . manufacturing communities," was the first law in the nation mandating a sixty-hour workweek. Massachusetts textile mill owners largely ignored the provisions of the ten-hour statute until legislators struck the word "willful" from the act in 1879. Regardless of intent, manufacturers could now be prosecuted and fined if women or anyone under eighteen years old worked more than sixty hours a week. Increased enforcement by state factory inspectors and the ability to more easily prosecute offenders forced growing numbers of Massachusetts textile mill owners to comply with the sixty-hour provisions from 1879 onward. In addition to the 1879 amendment, other changes made to the 1874 ten-hour act required the posting of notices at manufactories stating the daily schedule of work (1880), machinery start and stop times (1886), and meal times (1887); extended the law's provisions to mechanical and mercantile establishments (1883); outlawed work by children under fourteen years old between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. (1888); and prohibited work by women and all workers under eighteen years old between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. (1890).[15]

Following the passage of the 1874 act, Massachusetts passed the nation's first general factory safety act in 1877, establishing requirements for fire escapes, for covering dangerous machine parts, and for use and operation of elevators. The act also created a state factory safety inspection force. But agitation for additional labor legislation waned until the 1880s. The nationwide economic crisis that began in 1873 undercut the strength of many workers' organizations throughout the state. However, as the economy began to recover by the end of the decade, the often overlapping constituencies of textile craft unions, skilled

trades unions, and the Knights of Labor continued to push for more and better enforced regulatory legislation in Massachusetts.

The Knights of Labor was the first labor organization in the United States to spearhead a nationwide lobbying effort to secure laws that would advance the needs of the "producing classes." For industrial workers affiliated with the Knights in Massachusetts, this call to use the state to forward workers' interests resulted in movements seeking to further reduce manufacturing work hours, to create a state board of arbitration, to pass an employer liability act, and to abolish the fining system used in textile mills throughout the state.[16]

Lobbyists for the various unions active in the state made regular appearances before numerous committees of the Massachusetts legislature to argue in favor of prolabor bills, and they also endorsed and marshaled support for political candidates who supported their goals. At the height of its success, the Knights of Labor claimed a membership in Massachusetts of over thirty thousand men and women, including over five thousand workers employed in textile mills throughout the state. From 1884 to 1887 the Knights of Labor had two local assemblies of several hundred members in Chicopee, Massachusetts, home to the Dwight Manufacturing Company.[17] During the years in which the Knights of Labor played an active part in shaping the political landscape of Massachusetts, the legislature created a state Board of Conciliation and Arbitration (1886); passed an employer liability act (1887); limited the use of the fining system for imperfect weaving (1887); and enacted a law allowing labor unions to become incorporated entities (1888). The legislature also established state requirements for cleaning machinery, for ventilation, for uniform meal hours for women and minors, and for fire prevention in manufacturing establishments (1887). It passed laws progressively increasing the age and education requirements for employing minors (1883, 1885, 1887, 1888, 1889) and outlawed night work in manufactories by minors (1888) and women (1890). "[A]s in the case of the ten-hour law, and many recent enactments intended to further the interests of wage workers, the Bay State is a conspicuous and daring leader," observed the editor of the *Commercial Bulletin* in 1886, attributing this to the fact that "the Knights of Labor have a very strong hold there."[18]

The power of the Knights of Labor waned in Massachusetts during the late 1880s and early 1890s, but organized labor continued to press its agenda at the statehouse. The Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, organized in 1887 as a state body representing Massachusetts unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), as well as independent textile craft unions filled the prolabor vacuum created by the Knights of Labor's decline. While the national AFL leadership, especially Samuel Gompers, often shied away from the union's endorsement of candidates or a specific political party, at the turn of the

century state federations of labor led reform campaigns, gave backing to labor-friendly candidates, lobbied legislatures, testified before committees, sometimes wrote and sponsored specific labor bills, and formed alliances with other reform groups active in seeking protective or regulatory legislation. "State legislatures form the most favorable point of attack and most of the legislative reforms we advocate must be obtained through this medium," argued Frank Foster, future AFL Legislative Committee chairperson, and "If possible, some special committee should be had in each State, whose duty it should be to formulate and advocate such laws as are deemed practicable to present."[19]

The Massachusetts State Federation of Labor established a legislative committee at its 1891 convention and adopted several legislative resolutions. One called for a fifty-eight-hour law for women and children. Another provided the funding for a permanent, paid lobbyist to the Massachusetts legislature. Upon the introduction of a fifty-eight-hour bill during the 1891 Massachusetts legislative session, representatives of the State Federation of Labor and men appearing on behalf of the Arkwright Club, an organization of corporate officers and senior-most management of textile mills located throughout New England, lobbied aggressively at the statehouse.[20] "The millions of the Arkwright club are massed against [the fifty-eight-hour bill]. Its agents are turning heaven and earth to secure its defeat," announced the editor of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor's official newspaper. "Two trained counsel are button-holing each senator," he continued, "and pulling all conceivable wires to prevent the passage of the measure." Representatives of individual mills, including Dwight Manufacturing Company treasurer J. Howard Nichols, submitted petitions and letters to members of the legislature stating their opposition to the bill. In the end, the collected efforts of the textile industry lobby could not prevent the fifty-eight-hour bill from passing.[21]

Many New England legislatures eventually passed laws regulating working hours, factory conditions, and ages of employment. As early as 1894, every northeastern state had factory regulations in place that mandated basic safety and sanitation measures. In 1900, the sixty-hour week was standard throughout the industrialized Northeast, with numerous states having child-labor laws that established minimum ages for employment, mandated educational requirements, and prohibited night work. The actual compliance with regulatory laws by factory owners and workers alike varied from community to community and state to state. By the turn of the century, Massachusetts's inspection and enforcement mechanisms for its labor legislation were the most sophisticated in the nation. "Massachusetts enjoys the unique distinction . . . of possessing a large staff of factory inspectors," Florence Kelley of the National Consumers' League noted, adding that "Massachusetts is, accordingly, the only state of which it may

be confidently asserted that its child-labor law is uniformly and effectively enforced."[22] Some industrialists continued to completely ignore state labor laws, preferring to pay the nominal penalties when caught, while adult industrial workers often falsified age and schooling certificates so that their children could find gainful employment and contribute to the family economy even if legally underage. According to historian Daniel Nelson, however, the threat of prosecution was usually enough to force compliance with most workplace regulations and "the impact of regulatory legislation in most states was substantial."[23]

Despite the labor legislation in force, the late 1880s were profitable years for Massachusetts mills. "And yet, with all their disadvantages," Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record* noted, "Northern mills are earning large profits. The reports from New England mills . . . during 1888 were very large. . . . The Dwight [paid dividends of] 10 per cent." However, for mills throughout New England, the dividends of the late 1880s often turned into losses during the 1890s. "Severe competition is now experienced from the Southern mills," noted the *Commercial Bulletin*, "and the pressure from this quarter is constantly increasing."[24] During the depression years of 1893 to 1897, southern competition and poor economic conditions forced companies throughout New England to forgo paying dividends and to significantly curtail operations or close completely. Southern mill building and cotton textile production, meanwhile, continued unabated. Warehouses full of unsold fabric, the hours restrictions recently imposed by the state legislature, and growing labor unrest combined to engender a sense of crisis among the owners of cotton textile mills throughout Massachusetts.[25]

During the depression years of the 1890s, the New England textile industry press and manufacturers' organizations focused their attentions on devising solutions to the question of what to do about southern competition. One possible answer was for Massachusetts mills to avoid the challenge of southern manufacturers entirely by switching their production from coarse and medium goods to fine goods. As early as 1882, the *Boston Journal of Commerce* argued that the only way New England mills would be able to continue operating profitably as more and more southern mills opened for business was to diversify and "get into finer goods."[26] By the 1890s, diversification made sense to increasing numbers of Massachusetts coarse-goods manufacturers. According to Arthur Lowe, president of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association, a conversion to making fine goods was a pathway to future profits for two reasons. First, there was no southern competition in the markets for the highest thread-count cotton goods, and second, most fine goods sold in the United States were imported from England and mainland Europe and thus a sector into which New England manufacturers could potentially move to avoid direct competition with

cheap southern-made goods. Lowe added that New England had a competitive advantage over southern mills in the production of fine goods because of the comparative lack of skill among operatives in the southern textile workforce.[27]

However, the problem with the fine-goods strategy, as noted by the *Commercial Bulletin* in 1895, was that "the process of turning over into a finer line . . . can only gradually be accomplished." Installing new machinery and retraining a workforce required a substantial outlay of money and a significant investment of time. Overseas producers dominated the domestic fine-goods market, and breaking into it would not be easy. Massachusetts manufacturers saw tariff protections as the way this could successfully be accomplished, but the effects of tariff revisions would also take time to be felt. The issues of time, money, and markets, when taken together with the fact that southern mill operatives would undoubtedly gain the skills necessary to produce fine goods as the South's textile industry matured, meant that the fine-goods strategy would at best be a stopgap solution for Massachusetts textile companies.[28]

Replacing old machinery with the latest spinning and weaving technology was another approach Massachusetts cotton textile manufacturers proposed to maintain their competitive position in the marketplace. Mill owners recognized that the majority of Piedmont mills were decades younger than New England mills. Southern mill owners equipped their new mills with the latest automatic looms and ring spinning machines, or if they initially used older machinery, they rapidly replaced it.[29]

The introduction of the Northrop automatic loom in the 1880s made weaving more efficient and cost effective. Before the Northrop loom, weavers had to stop work to put a new bobbin into place every time the machine's yarn-supplying shuttle ran out. The Northrop loom's design allowed weavers to install numerous bobbins at one time, and the bobbins then rotated and automatically resupplied the loom with yarn when needed. Not only did the Northrop loom make weaving operations more efficient, it also increased the number of looms one worker could capably tend. Although the Northrop loom was an expensive investment, piece rates for weavers working on this machinery in southern mills were about half those paid to weavers working on the older "plain looms" used more extensively in New England. Because weavers were the most numerous and among the highest-paid workers in cotton textile manufacturing, the implementation of this newest weaving technology gave southern mills a distinct cost advantage.[30]

The use of ring spinning machinery also benefited southern mill owners in their competition with Massachusetts textile manufacturers. Before the introduction of the ring spindle in 1870, the spinning of cotton took place on mule spindles, machinery that required skilled craftsmen to successfully maneuver

and that entailed a long period of training to learn to use. The ring spindle, however, automated the bulk of the work carried out by mulespinners. Ring spinning increased the speed of yarn production and lowered the level of strength and skill operatives needed to tend the machinery. Thus, southern manufacturers were able to employ large numbers of unskilled women and children as spinners for significantly lower wages than those paid to the skilled male spinners working on mules in New England mills. For Massachusetts textile manufacturers deciding whether or not to invest the capital necessary to overhaul the mule spinning machinery in a mill, an important consideration was the fact that mulespinners typically received the highest wages and were the best-organized segment of the labor force in any New England mill. Ridding one's mill of mulespinners would also eradicate the mulespinners' union.[31]

In spite of the potential advantages, Massachusetts mill owners often found it too costly to immediately retool mills with thousands of looms and hundreds of thousands of spindles. Some Massachusetts mills began replacing worn-out mule spindles and plain looms with ring spindles and Northrop looms as early as the 1880s, but this was a gradual process. Mulespinners, moreover, balked at management's attempts to exchange their mules for rings. "[C]ertain manufacturers openly charge the operatives with obstructing progress by opposing the use of improved machinery by resorting to agitation and strikes," observed Herbert Walmsley of New Bedford, Massachusetts, "forcing manufacturers to abandon the use of improved machinery . . . designed to . . . decrease the cost of production." Mulespinners resisted the implementation of ring spindles as much as possible in an attempt to maintain the control they exerted in the mills over wages, working conditions, and entrance into their craft. By the turn of the century, however, manufacturers had replaced mule spindles in New England mills to such an extent that the trade was well on its way to becoming obsolete.[32]

While Massachusetts textile manufacturers debated the relative merits of fine-goods production and the installation of new machinery, the labor legislation previously enacted in the Commonwealth became a lightning rod for criticism. "The long predicted has come," wrote the editor of the *Commercial Bulletin* in 1897. "There is stress. . . . Too much machinery has been installed. Too many mills have been built. Massachusetts has led the way on reducing hours of labor and suffers from her liberality."[33] According to cotton-mill owners throughout Massachusetts, the state's hours and ages regulations, when coupled with the low wages paid to southern operatives, made it impossible for Massachusetts-made goods to compete successfully with those manufactured in southern cotton mills. Massachusetts textile manufacturers extended their argument, forwarded during the 1870s and 1880s, that regulatory legislation made it more difficult to compete with mills in other New England states. This

argument now included the impact that the laws had on competition with mills in the Piedmont South, as well. The ability of Massachusetts textile mills to remain viable despite state-mandated age and hours standards shifted from being an intraregional to an interregional concern.

Restrictive laws in Massachusetts "have been piling up . . . touching cotton manufacturers until they cannot stand it much longer," noted T. Jefferson Coolidge, president of the Dwight Manufacturing Company in 1894. "The restrictions so imposed have tended to make production unprofitable," he continued, "and manufacturers surely cannot be expected to continue business in that case."[34] As early as 1874, when Massachusetts enacted the ten-hour law for women and children, textile mills in the state were effectively restricted to a maximum workweek of sixty hours. By 1892, this workweek had been further reduced to fifty-eight-hours, while other New England mills still ran sixty hours a week. Their competitors in the Piedmont South continued to operate eleven to twelve hours a day, with average workweeks in southern mills ranging from sixty-six to seventy-two hours. The Arkwright Club estimated that the long hours and the low wages in southern cotton mills made the cost of labor in the South about 40 percent less than in Massachusetts. According to the club, this regional disparity of labor costs alone was "sufficient to account fully for the difference between the prosperity of southern manufacturing and the adversity of northern mills; between the activity in the construction of new mills at the South and the stagnation of a similar industry" in Massachusetts.[35]

Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record* viewed "the hours of labor in Massachusetts . . . with undisguised delight," but the editor of the *Commercial Bulletin* came to the conclusion that "the time has come when intelligent people must say to the Legislature when restrictive labor laws are proposed, Hands off our industries!"[36] As the 1893 depression wore on, some Massachusetts textile manufacturers went one step beyond simply calling for a moratorium on the passage of any new regulatory legislation in the Commonwealth. Understanding that it was low-cost labor in combination with long hours that gave the South its greatest competitive advantage, Massachusetts textile manufacturers' associations began lobbying for the reversal of existing regulatory laws. "Manufacturers must act for themselves," argued the Arkwright Club in 1897, "and endeavor to introduce in their own mills conditions more nearly resembling those of their southern competitors." The strategy the Arkwright Club proposed for effecting this change was to lower wages while at the same time working for the complete repeal of ages and hours legislation already in effect in Massachusetts. The Arkwright Club called on Massachusetts textile manufacturers to "act all together for the common defence [*sic*]" and with the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association, spearheaded a lobbying effort at

the state legislature "to give expression in the strongest terms to the importance of seeking a reversal of the policy which has handicapped New England, and which has placed a double burden upon Massachusetts."[37]

The campaigns of the Massachusetts manufacturers' groups proved unsuccessful. The Massachusetts State Federation of Labor took the lead in opposing the Arkwright Club's attempts to have the state's regulatory legislation nullified. The unionists pursued what the federation called a "vigorous policy of education." It sent representatives to each of seventy-eight state legislative hearings held on the matter of rescinding regulatory statutes, and it had one member present at every regular legislative session. With their repeal strategy stymied, manufacturers' groups began circulating the argument that the solution to the southern competition problem was not to lower standards in Massachusetts mills but to raise southern standards through national legislation. A minority of Massachusetts textile manufacturers adopted a stance during the 1890s that if factory regulation was a necessary evil with which they had to deal, then restrictions on hours and child labor should be imposed equally throughout the entire industry. Commenting on an 1895 meeting at which Massachusetts textile manufacturers debated the pros and cons of the implementation of national labor standards as a means of neutralizing southern competition, Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record* noted wryly that "[t]his very kind and generous proposition . . . will hardly come to pass." Neither mill owners nor Massachusetts textile unionists who sought better standards for southern textile workers as a means of protecting northern gains made any significant headway in securing national labor legislation.[38]

As manufacturers, politicians, and unionists debated solutions that might mitigate the effects of southern competition on the Massachusetts textile industry, the city of Chicopee felt the full brunt of the 1893 economic depression. The city's two largest employers, the Dwight Manufacturing Company and the Chicopee Manufacturing Company, produced cotton textiles. In 1890, the Dwight Manufacturing Company was the largest manufactory in Chicopee, employing over 2,000 operatives of the city's 14,050 inhabitants. Despite the growth of other industries since the 1860s, the city of Chicopee remained primarily a mill town. The cotton manufacturing industry was the foundation of the local economy. Entire families depended on the wages they earned in textile manufacturing, and businesses throughout the city relied on a steady income from the thousands of operatives who earned their livelihoods in the mills. The Dwight Company's announcement in August 1893 that it would institute either a 10 percent wage reduction or a complete mill shutdown in September, however, did not come as a complete surprise to the community. "In view of the business troubles," the local press observed, "the announcement was not

unexpected."[39] The paper reported that the news of the wage cut or curtailment "was taken for the most part quietly by the men," but the Dwight Company's notice precipitated a local labor crisis. This local event intersected with the state-mandated ages and hours standards and the interregional fight for control of the coarse-goods market to create a turning point in the history of the Dwight Manufacturing Company.[40]

As was true throughout Massachusetts, the management of the Dwight Manufacturing Company had been engaged in an ongoing struggle with organized labor in its mill throughout the 1870s and 1880s. During these years, Dwight employees took part in collective actions intended primarily to prevent wage reductions or to demand wage increases. Dwight management, meanwhile, attempted to keep organized labor from becoming firmly entrenched in its mill. The Dwight Company owners perceived their complete managerial control over the production process to be undermined by the progression of labor laws passed by the state legislature as well as by their battles with striking workers in the mill. In the minds of the Dwight Company's owners, their dealings with legislators and with labor reached the breaking point in the 1890s.

The small, sporadic, departmental walkouts that the Dwight Manufacturing Company experienced during the 1850s and 1860s became large-scale protests during the 1873 and 1893 economic depressions. The Dwight Company's first union-led strike occurred in April 1874, lasted five weeks and, according to the local press, was "one of the most remarkable strikes which has ever occurred in this region." Several months after management instituted a 15 percent wage reduction in December 1873, Dwight mulespinners petitioned the company for a return to the old schedule of wages, noting that "ever since [the December wage cut] we have faithfully continued to work for the reduced rates—But that there has been no corresponding reduction in the cost of living, rents and provisions being high as ever, and every day sinking us more and more into debt." George Bedlow, agent of the Chicopee mill, refused the mulespinners' request. They walked out of the Dwight mill, en masse, on 3 April 1874.[41]

The mulespinners' strike forced the closure of two of Dwight's seven production buildings and idled weavers in the remaining five since they had no materials with which to work. The Chicopee strikers prepared for a protracted battle. Mulespinners in Lowell, Fall River, and Lawrence made contributions to help support the Dwight spinners and their families during their struggle with management. The Dwight Company felt no need to negotiate with the mulespinners, assuming that their places could easily be filled by mulespinners from other textile centers who were looking for work because of the depressed condition of the economy. The Dwight spinners, however, successfully deterred scab workers from taking their places by picketing at the mill and at Chicopee

railroad stations, "warning away spinners from other villages, who are desirous of obtaining work." Of the fifteen mulespinners that Agent Bedlow hired during the first two weeks of the strike, all but one who was "furnished a home in one of the company's blocks, and . . . kept 'under guard' " left the company's employ only days later.[42]

The strike began to fail when Dwight management instructed company boardinghouse keepers to evict strikers and their families, and when the local business community began to "thoroughly condemn [the strikers'] course, as their obstinacy" caused "a general and increasing depression in business." Within a month of the initial walkout, Dwight management succeeded in hiring enough replacement spinners to run nearly three-fourths of the company's mules. This lack of support from the wider community and the unemployment and underemployment caused by the depression handicapped the mulespinners. But, more importantly, the spinners were unable to secure the backing of Dwight's weavers, who went back to work when the strikebreakers restarted the idled mules. This action fundamentally undermined the ability of the mulespinners to use a disruption of production to force the company to negotiate with them. Agent Bedlow announced on 4 May 1874 that the company would not recognize the mulespinners as a group and that "the strikers will not be taken back as a body, but will be re-engaged, if at all, singly." When faced with the certain loss of their jobs, the Dwight mulespinners ended the strike. Those who the company took back returned to work at the reduced pay scale.[43] The Dwight mulespinners, who officially organized a local branch of the National Mulespinners' Union during this 1874 conflict, began what proved to be an extended period of rebuilding.

Another series of wage cuts followed the mulespinners' strike, and even though Dwight operatives were, according to the local press, barely able "to keep body and soul together, even with the strictest economy," no other walkouts occurred during the 1870s. Shortly after the 1874 strike and continuing into the 1880s, the Dwight Manufacturing Company began employing strategies meant to prevent workers from organizing and engaging in collective protest. In 1878, management instituted the "three employee" rule, a policy requiring all families renting company-owned tenements to have at least three members working for the Dwight Company. The threat of eviction, used successfully by the company in the 1874 strike, was a constant risk and the "three employee" rule made more families directly dependent on the mill as the sole source of income than ever before.[44]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company also began requiring new employees to sign statements agreeing to refrain from joining a union or participating in union-led activities. In an 1881 version of the contract, potential operatives

agreed to "abstain from aiding, encouraging or abetting any strike among the help . . . and refrain from encouragement and counseling the help in any disturbance and shall use their efforts to maintain pleasant relations between the help and said Company." After a short-lived mulespinners' walkout in May 1883, all employees wishing to return to work also had to sign a similar statement agreeing to "conduct himself properly and refrain from interfering with the rest of the employees of said company and also from instigating or from being interested in instigating any strikes or other movement among said employees by which said employees shall cease work."[45]

The Dwight Company, likewise, blacklisted employees who engaged in collective action, guaranteeing that they would have a difficult time finding work in any mill in the area. In 1885, for example, James Cumnock, agent of the Chicopee mill, corresponded with George Hills, agent of the Lymann Mills in nearby Holyoke, about Dwight employees who had given Cumnock "some trouble." Hills assured Cumnock, "I will see that they do not get in our Mill, and shall be very happy to concede with you as has been done heretofore." In his February 1883 testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee Upon the Relations between Labor and Capital, also known as the "Blair Committee," Frank Foster, publisher of the Massachusetts-based *Labor Leader*, discussed the practice of using threats of eviction from company-owned tenements and blacklisting as two key things preventing unionization among industrial workers in Massachusetts. By 1887, Foster noted, "The Dwight manufacturing company virtually has [Chicopee] under its thumbs and controls it in many ways."[46]

Labor-management conflict flared at the Dwight Manufacturing Company again during the depression of 1893. In the weeks between the announced intention of the company to cut wages or completely curtail production in August 1893, "the better educated and better paid class of workmen" at the Dwight mill made it known to Agent Cumnock that they thought a "short shut-down would be the more preferable of the two evils" rather than a reduction of wages that could last indefinitely. Debate within the workforce continued, however, as organized mulespinners and loomfixers supported a shutdown but many Dwight workers, especially the Polish weavers in the company's employ, pointed out that even if management closed the mill, there was no guarantee that the company would not simply institute lower wages upon its reopening. "A heavy reduction means 'hard times' in earnest," the local press opined. "[T]he want which would be occasioned by the throwing of over 2,000 hands entirely out of employment," it continued, "must be avoided at any cost."[47]

On 4 September 1893, Agent Cumnock instituted a reduction on all of Dwight's departmental schedules of wages. Although not members of any formally organized union body, two hundred weavers from Dwight buildings 5 and

6 responded to the wage cut by walking out in protest. By day's end an estimated six hundred weavers from buildings 5, 6, and 7 were on strike. "The majority [of the strikers] are Poles," the local press reported. They left the mill because "their wages are regulated by piece work, not by time . . . and the reduction will cut them down about 10 per cent." The company threw an additional 650 operatives out of work when it closed the three of Dwight's seven production buildings from which the greater part of the striking workers came. In light of the depression and the lessons learned from the 1874 mulespinners' strike, other Dwight workers, especially the unionized mulespinners and loomfixers, did not think that conditions were favorable for winning concessions from the company. Thus they did not support the weavers' actions with voluntary walkouts of their own.[48]

Management of the Dwight Manufacturing Company, as was their practice in dealing with workers during previous periods of labor strife, not only refused to bargain with the striking weavers but also used the strike to purge its mill of militant operatives. The company announced that it would reemploy any worker who would return at the reduced wage scales but that the "instigators" of the strike would be "refused employment should they seek it." The weavers also received warning that "the company's boarding-house keepers have received orders to give such persons notice."[49] Indeed, four days into the walkout, Agent Cumnock, showing that he would not even engage in a dialogue with the striking workers, left Chicopee for a two-week trip to Chicago. Given the buildup of goods in its warehouses, the limited demand for cotton textiles, and the continued production in buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4, the company felt no compunction to settle the strike. The Dwight Company's intensified focus on labor costs in the face of southern competition, moreover, dictated that it would not let workers prescribe wages through collective action that could put the company at an even greater disadvantage in the coarse-goods market. According to Agent Cumnock, acting on behalf of the company's corporate officers, any bargaining with the strikers would only encourage workers to use militancy as a negotiating tactic in the future. Less than two weeks after the weavers' walkout, the near impossibility of finding work elsewhere in a depression-plagued industry, the intransigence of the company, and the lack of support from the other Dwight operatives who continued to work forced the majority of the strikers back to their jobs at the reduced scale of wages.[50]

"The cotton mills have not been running full time," observed the local press four years after the weavers' strike ended. " . . . [I]f the city is to depend on these alone for the future, the prospect is gloomy."[51] In the wake of the weavers' strike and while Chicopee remained mired in economic depression, the owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company embraced a new strategy to main-

The Dwight Manufacturing Company produced two major lines of coarse goods, trademarked as "white star" and "anchor." Entrance to the Dwight Manufacturing Company in Chicopee, Massachusetts, with the Dwight star and anchor flanking the main mill gate. (Courtesy Edward Bellamy Memorial Association, Chicopee, Massachusetts)

tain the company's viability. Because southern-made coarse goods continued to undersell those made in Massachusetts, Dwight decided to build a branch plant in the South so that it could remain competitive and profitable. "They are going South determined . . . to control the coarse goods trade," noted the *Manufacturers' Record*. "They are looking for locations and will build during this period of depression in order to be ready for the return of good times."[52] The Dwight Manufacturing Company banked its future on the company's ability to compete successfully in the coarse-goods market by supplementing the production of its Chicopee mill with textiles manufactured at a lower price in the Piedmont South. In spite of calls throughout the New England industry for northern mills to focus their production on fine goods or face inevitable ruin, the Dwight Company had not given up on the possibility that making coarse goods could still be an option for Massachusetts cotton manufacturers. For the owners of the Dwight Company, the new southern mill would be an extension of, not a replacement for, the Chicopee facilities.

"A reason why some of our mills are planning extensions in the South," argued the *Commercial Bulletin*, "is to save the value in their trade mark [*sic*] on certain lines of cheap fabrics in which they have made a reputation. They see the time coming when Southern production will displace these fabrics unless they can be made under as favorable auspices."[53] After more than fifty years

in business, customers the world over knew well the Dwight name and trademarks. Through building a southern subsidiary, the company had found a way to couple its name recognition with the "advantages" that southern mills had by virtue of their regional location.[54] Dwight's owners wanted to bolster its share of the coarse-goods market without having to abandon the millions of dollars invested in mills, manpower, and machinery in Chicopee. They believed this could be achieved by expanding the company's productive capacity to a location where it could pay its workers less and could operate without the restrictions imposed upon it in Massachusetts by striking workers and state regulations.

Actual and potential labor militancy at the Dwight mill, the effective lobbying of Massachusetts unions, restrictive legislation passed in the Commonwealth, and the production advantages that could be had in a new southern mill with updated machinery facilitated the Dwight Company's 1893 decision to open a southern branch factory. Dwight's move to build in the South illustrated, according to the *Commercial Bulletin*, the "disposition of manufacturers . . . to make no important additions or extensions of their enterprises in Massachusetts, but to go outside her borders . . . where the labor agitator is not such a power, and where the manufacturers are not constantly harassed by new and nagging restrictions."[55] The Dwight Company was one of a handful of Massachusetts mills that chose to capitalize on, rather than fight, the competitive advantages production in the Piedmont South offered cotton textile manufacturers.

To the owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company, the South was the land of low wages, laissez-faire, and high profits. For these industrialists, the South was a region overflowing with "docile" labor. It was a place where state and local governments were amenable to the will of manufacturers and embraced them as a way to revive the economic pulse of a war-devastated region. The Dwight Company viewed the South as a means of escape from the regulations forced on it by the state and from the demands of organized workers in their mill and in the halls of the legislature. After the General Assembly of Massachusetts passed an act in February 1894 allowing the Dwight Manufacturing Company to increase its capital stock and to "carry on the business of manufacturing cotton and woolen goods in any part of the United States of America," the question for the Dwight Company was not *if* it would build a new mill in the South, but exactly where.[56] By the winter of 1894, the Dwight Company had decided that its new mill would be located in Alabama.

CHAPTER THREE

"A Model Manufacturing Town"

Moving to Alabama City

"No nation ever became wealthy by raising the raw material and then exchanging it for the manufactured article," wrote William Gregg of South Carolina in 1844. "The manufacturing people always have the advantage."[1] Three years after the Dwight Manufacturing Company began producing cotton textiles in Chicopee, Massachusetts, Gregg was one of a small number of southerners calling for broad, regional industrialization of the South. Throughout the antebellum South, however, industrialization occurred only to the extent that it served the interests of the region's slave-based agricultural economy. Railroads, iron works, and cotton, grist, and saw mills served as offshoots of the southern plantation, and most investments in antebellum southern industry were directly related to fluctuations in the cotton market. When cotton prices were high, land and slaves were the outlets for surplus capital. Some manufactories operated in southern cities and were scattered throughout the countryside by the 1820s and 1830s. However, the downward spiral of cotton prices in the 1840s caused many white southerners to reconsider regional industrialization, especially the development of an indigenous cotton textile industry, within the context of overall southern economic diversification. Low crop prices made investments in and potential profits earned from manufactories increasingly attractive. Industrial boosters like William Gregg, moreover, argued that expanding the South's manufacturing capacity would help break the region's dependence on the North for basic manufactured goods.

Proponents of southern industrialization received a great deal of press during the 1840s and early 1850s. Nevertheless, according to historian Randall Miller, the commitment made by wealthy planters and merchants to the development of southern industry during these years remained limited, because economic boosterism was, Randall observed, only "a child of the agricultural depression." Since planters and wealthy merchants tied to King Cotton were the ones who held the capital resources necessary to underwrite any meaningful manufacturing pursuits, southern industry remained small and localized. Once cotton prices rebounded in the 1850s, investments returned to land and slaves.[2]

The first fully integrated cotton textile mill in the state of Alabama began operations in 1832. During the antebellum "cotton mill boom" of the 1840s, entrepreneurs constructed two more mills in the state. By 1860, cotton manufacturing was the second largest industrial employer in Alabama. When the Civil War began, Alabama had fourteen cotton mills, over half of which were spinning mills with few or no looms. Only six of Alabama's mills carried out the entire process of textile production from raw cotton to unfinished cloth. During the antebellum period, neither Alabama's textile industry nor that of any other southern state equaled the size or reached the levels of managerial and technical maturity achieved in the New England and Mid-Atlantic industries. In 1860, when the Massachusetts Dwight Manufacturing Company by itself was capitalized at $1.2 million and employed 1,600 workers, cotton mills in the entire state of Alabama represented $1.3 million in invested capital and had a textile workforce numbering just slightly over 1,300. Through the 1870s and into the first decades of the early twentieth century, however, Alabama experienced a "mini-industrial revolution," and the Dwight Manufacturing Company's mobile capital played an important part in it.[3]

"Be it known I am no enthusiast, nor am I a citizen of Gadsden or even Alabama," a "traveling man" informed the readers of the *Manufacturers' Record* in 1887. "Accident located some towns, but nature located Gadsden," he continued. "I . . . can state within the bounds of absolute truth that I have visited more than twenty States and at least 1,200 incorporated towns; yet I have never seen iron, coal, timber, . . . river transportation, health, food, water and topographical beauty combined in one range of landscape before I came here."[4] Beginning in the 1880s, sentiments similar to those of the "traveling man" could be read in myriad forms in hundreds of newspapers and pamphlets about scores of towns and localities throughout Alabama. Like other states of the Piedmont South during the 1880s and 1890s, through published materials and in the halls of the state legislature, Alabama embarked on an increasingly aggressive booster campaign meant to facilitate industrialization within its borders. Eager to attract investments in textiles, mining, and metals manufacturing that had the potential to jumpstart a statewide economic reconstruction, state legislators and local civic groups worked in tandem to create an image of Alabama as a place where natural resources abounded, where invested money would bear fruitful returns, and where entrepreneurs would not be harassed by state regulations.

During the 1886–87 session of the Alabama state legislature, representatives passed legislation intended to advertise the state to would-be investors. Although an attempt to establish a state industrial and immigration bureau failed in 1884, state-sanctioned action "to encourage immigration and investment of capital in the State of Alabama" became law in February 1887. The statute

appropriated $2,000 to purchase the copyright of Dr. Benjamin Franklin Riley's text, *Alabama as It Is; or The Immigrant's and Capitalist's Guide Book to Alabama*, as well as an additional $1,500 to publish and distribute five thousand copies of the book.[5] Originally published in 1887, Dr. Riley said his purpose for writing *Alabama as It Is* was to describe each county in the state and "whatever facilities they possess for future development" in order to "meet a demand which has long existed" for information about Alabama's resources "written in the language common to the people." The book became the state-endorsed instrument meant to exhibit the diversity and potential of Alabama's natural resources and demonstrate why these resources placed Alabama "in advance of any other State of the American Union."[6] The goal was to show why one should invest in Alabama but, more importantly, why one should choose it over other southern states.

In *Alabama as It Is*, B. F. Riley divided the state into four sections and systematically analyzed county-by-county data on each. For every county, the text included the date of the county's formation, its populations in 1870 and 1880, the racial composition of the population, land area and prices, the number of acres of government-owned land, the number of acres of tilled land, the products grown, the types of minerals and timbers available, as well as the waterways, chief towns, and the finished and projected railroads, schools, and churches. Speaking directly to possible northern investors, Riley also made the point of mentioning that "Northern people will meet with no jealousies or indignities. The animosities of the war are all buried and forgotten . . . man is esteemed according to his moral, intellectual and industrial worth—not for his political sentiments."[7] But *Alabama as It Is* was much more than an assurance for skittish Yankee capitalists or a simple compendium of facts and figures. It was also an implicit summary of the overall goals and objectives of Alabama's post–Civil War industrial boosters.

B. F. Riley's study illustrated how establishing industries that could manufacture the state's cotton crop and develop its timber and mineral resources would generate economic growth. He also stressed the fact that Alabama was a predominantly agricultural state and that long-term prosperity depended on using the state's agricultural resources to grow more than cotton. "[W]hat would minerals be to a region without agriculture?" he queried. "Every interest is more or less dependent upon agriculture, and must rise or fall with the increase or decrease of the products of the field." Riley went on to assert that industrialization would break the South's economic dependence on cotton by facilitating diversified agriculture because the growth of industrial and urban populations, he noted, would create a need for foodstuffs. Urban dwellers and factory

workers, Riley's argument continued, would generate local markets for those who raised livestock and grew fruits, vegetables, and grains. Throughout the region, the amount of land used to grow cotton, therefore, would decrease with a corresponding increase in the staple crop's market value. This process, Riley informed his readers, "will lead to the restoration of our agricultural system under a new *regime*."[8] In line with New South spokesmen throughout Alabama and the entire region, Riley embraced diversified farming as an absolute necessity and as the means through which those who worked the land, in addition to those who found jobs in industry, would share in the promise of a reborn South.

Promotional campaigns initiated at the local level supplied information and reflected objectives similar to those found in *Alabama as It Is*. In towns and cities throughout Alabama, leading community members produced a body of booster literature targeting outside investors, especially northern manufacturers. Civic boosters used editorials and advertisements in regional and national newspapers to inform readers of the "advantages to capital" found within a particular locale. Full-page advertisements placed by "young progressive towns of Alabama," such as Gadsden, Bessemer, Tuscaloosa, Anniston, Decatur, and Florence, began appearing regularly in the *Manufacturers' Record* and continued to appear intermittently through the early 1890s. Each town's advertisement listed the reasons why intelligent and astute entrepreneurs should invest and build industrial establishments there.[9]

Community boosters also prepared and published brochures and detailed pamphlets meant to generate interest in their towns. Local church leaders, merchants, politicians, and judges calling themselves collectively the "citizens of Gadsden" for example, distributed a pamphlet intended to make their city and the surrounding area stand out as having the greatest potential for industrial and agricultural development of any place in Alabama. The publication called attention to a boon for investors wanting easy access to markets: the three lines of railroad running through Gadsden—the Anniston and Cincinnati, the Tennessee and Coosa Valley, and the Rome and Decatur—Gadsden's location on the Coosa River, and the town's location fifty-four miles northeast of Birmingham and ninety-two miles south of Chattanooga. The pamphlet touted the iron, clay, stone, and coal deposits along the Coosa, the stands of timber on nearby Lookout Mountain, the fertile farmland in the countryside where farmers grew "some of the best grades of cotton," a healthful location, mild climate, good schools, and numerous churches. Howard Gardner Nichols of the Dwight Manufacturing Company would later note that the transportation infrastructure, the city's proximity to major urban areas, the grades of cotton available

from farms in the valley, and the sources of coal located in the Gadsden area helped persuade the company to choose adjacent Alabama City as the location for its southern cotton textile mill.[10]

Through the 1870s and 1880s, much of the industrial growth in Alabama occurred in the iron industry. The textile industry in Alabama was virtually the same size in 1880 as it had been in 1860 due to losses sustained during the Civil War and in addition to the fact that, unlike elsewhere in the Piedmont South, local industrialists were more likely to invest in iron and mineral concerns rather than cotton manufacture. In 1860, the Alabama textile industry consisted of fourteen mills with a total capitalization $1.3 million and 1,312 workers. By 1880, Alabama had sixteen mills representing $1.3 million in invested capital and 1,400 workers. "The iron industries and kindred interests have attracted so much attention in Alabama for several years that the business men of that State have failed to appreciate the importance of cotton manufacturing," wrote Richard Edmonds in 1887. Citing figures showing that Alabama had 90,834 spindles compared to Georgia with 390,288 spindles, North Carolina with an estimated 275,000 spindles, and South Carolina with over 225,000 spindles, he continued, "These mills, almost without exception, appear to be enjoying great prosperity. . . . They are not only making money for their owners but they are furnishing employment for thousands of hands . . . and also creating a home demand for diversified agricultural products." Alabama, Edmonds argued, "needs to build such mills."[11]

Many in Alabama came to agree with Edmonds and through the late 1880s and 1890s, state legislators and civic boosters increasingly focused their attention on attracting outside investments to aid in the expansion of the state's cotton manufacturing industry. It would take more than the favorable climate, natural resources, and railroad lines described in promotional literature, however, to persuade northern textile manufacturers that investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in the state of Alabama made good business sense. But in the 1890s, a confluence of events occurred that led some New England cotton textile manufacturers, including the Dwight Manufacturing Company, to make the decision to establish southern branch factories there.

Circumstances in New England, including poor business conditions, northern mill curtailments and closures, labor unrest, state regulations, and mounting competition from southern mills led numerous New England textile manufacturers to seriously consider investing in the South. At the same time, aggressive southern campaigns to attract northern investments, improved regional transportation networks, the availability of cheap and abundant southern labor, and inducements offered by the state government, further facilitated a wave of New England textile investments in Alabama. According to Gavin

Wright, the 1890s were "a demoralizing time in New England" and the first time before the 1920s during which northern investments in southern textiles were significant.[12] Between 1890 and the turn of the century, Alabama had the largest increase in textile capacity of any state in the South, and northern investments in the state's textile industry during these years were crucial. Nonsouthern entrepreneurs and corporations, as well as commission houses and machine manufacturers located in the North provided 52 percent of the capital spent on new textile mills built in the state between 1880 and 1895, and 71 percent of the capital between 1895 and 1900. New England firms constructed three branch factories in the state by 1900, representing over one hundred thousand spindles and a total capitalization of more than $4 million.[13]

As in the case of the publication and distribution of promotional literature in the 1880s, government inducements at state and local levels worked in concert to secure the investment of northern textile dollars in Alabama. The populist movement played an important part in facilitating support for statutes relating to infrastructure and industrial development among those members of Alabama's legislature who represented the interests of large-scale planters. These planters primarily resided in the southern part of the state, known widely as the Black Belt. In order to perpetuate their influence in state politics, they aligned themselves with industrialists living in the northern and fastest growing part of the state. The planters embraced the economic initiatives of industrial boosters meant to stimulate development throughout the state and mitigate farmers' economic distress, which the planters saw as precipitating the populist challenge to their political power. In fact, Thomas Jones, a former lawyer for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, became Alabama's governor in 1892 with the support of this planter-industrialist coalition. Running against Reuben Kolb, a candidate backed heavily by populists and wage earners, Jones touted himself as a proponent of "conservative progress" and industrialization through attracting out-of-state investments. Although Kolb found substantial support in urban areas and northern mining towns, Jones prevailed, albeit by a slim margin of under twelve thousand votes, by winning eleven of the state's twelve Black Belt counties.[14]

Tax exemptions for new textile investments were one kind of state-sponsored incentive backed by Jones and his supporters that was meant to draw capital investments to the state. In February 1893, the Alabama legislature enacted a law "for the purposes of encouraging the building and operating of factories for the spinning of thread, yarns, and the weaving of cloth and other fabrics of cotton and wool in the State." This statute authorized counties, cities, and towns to free property, buildings, and machinery used in textile manufacturing from taxation for five years. Noting that lenient tax laws elsewhere in the South

caused a significant amount of capital "to go to neighboring states, when otherwise they would come to Alabama," Governor Thomas Jones called on the state legislature the following year to enact additional exemptions that would allow investors to "act with confidence." No additional legislative action on the taxation matter occurred until February 1897, when the General Assembly passed a law exempting from state taxation "any person, copartnership, association of individuals, or corporations incorporated under the laws of the State of Alabama" that within five years of the passage of the law "invest, expend, lay out and pay at least fifty thousand dollars in money in the erection, building and construction of cotton mills or factories" in the state. The legislature amended this law in March 1901, extending the five-year provision to ten years as long as the construction or expansion of the factory took place by February 1902.[15]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and began construction on its Alabama mill two years prior to the passage of the 1897 tax exemption act. Nonetheless, Reuben A. Mitchell, then agent of the Alabama City mill, assured Dwight treasurer J. Howard Nichols that the expansions of the southern mill and new construction on mill property that the company began in 1898 would not be subject to state taxation. "It is clearly the policy of our state to encourage cotton manufacturing enterprises," Mitchell wrote, confident that there "would be no difficulty . . . in having the Legislature include our mill in the benefits of this statute."[16]

While an exemption granted by the legislature did make the 1897 law applicable to the Dwight Manufacturing Company, it played no part in Dwight's earlier choice to build its branch factory in Alabama. The 1893 statute allowing counties, towns, and cities to forgo taxing textile manufactories was, however, influential and important in Dwight's selection of location. Acting on the prerogatives allowed them by the state, Etowah County and Alabama City officials assured the Dwight Company that they would not tax a new mill constructed there. In the opinion of a "prominent citizen," this tax exemption granted by Etowah County was "one of the best things that ever happened." The Dwight Manufacturing Company paid over $23,000 in local taxes in 1893 on its Chicopee properties and according to Dwight's Howard Gardner Nichols, the Alabama tax law and its comparative potential savings for the company "had much to do" with the Dwight Manufacturing Company locating in the state.[17]

The issue of state labor regulation in Alabama played an essential and arguably decisive role in the decision-making process of Dwight's corporate officers to construct a branch factory there. Massachusetts had a long history of using state legislation as a way to keep children from working in manufacturing establishments and to limit working hours. In 1887, Alabama became the first southern state to enact an hours regulation and child-labor law. This statute

prohibited "compelling" women to work for more than eight hours in "mechanical and manufacturing businesses," established an eight-hour day for children under the age of fourteen employed "in any factory, workshop or other place used for mechanical or manufacturing purposes," and made illegal the employment of children under the age of fifteen in coal or iron mines. Punishment for violation of the law was a fine of five to fifteen dollars; its language, nevertheless, was open to interpretation and included no enforcement mechanisms.[18]

Assemblies of the Knights of Labor based in urban centers like Birmingham, Mobile, and Montgomery, with the assistance of labor-friendly state representatives they helped to elect, led the campaign for the passage of this 1887 law. State Senator Daniel Smith and House Representative T. G. Bush led the charge. During the 1886–87 legislative session, they introduced an hours and child-labor restriction bill for consideration in their respective chambers. Both men represented Mobile, a city with a strong union presence that included printers, blacksmiths, and carpenters, as well as active Knights of Labor assemblies made up largely of construction workers and skilled tradesmen. During the same session, legislators enacted the statute to encourage industrial investment through the purchase and distribution of B. F. Riley's *Alabama as It Is*, but the overwhelming majority of the state's lawmakers represented nonurban or nonmanufacturing districts and viewed the potential passage of the age and hours regulations with indifference. For those representatives of coal mining areas where mine owners employed children, the lack of enforcement provisions made the impact the act might have on businessmen operating in their districts a seemingly moot point. Because of the small number of textile mills operating in Alabama at that time, moreover, no organized bloc of textile industry lobbyists existed to oppose the legislation. The Mobile-sponsored hours bill passed the Alabama Senate by a vote of nineteen to one and passed the House without a single opposing vote. The only dissenting vote came from the representative from Elmore County, home to a textile mill since 1866.[19]

The strength of the Knights of Labor in the South, however, began to wane by 1888. Except for a small number of unions based mostly in urban areas, the region was virtually union free for a decade. In fact, in February 1889, the state representatives of Elmore County and the representatives of Autauga County, where investors established a cotton mill in 1887, successfully pushed legislation through the Alabama House and Senate repealing the 1887 hours and child-labor law as it related to the counties of Elmore and Autauga.[20] It was during this lull in union activity that Alabama stepped up its cotton mill campaign and that the Dwight Manufacturing Company made the decision to build a subsidiary mill in the South.

When the Dwight Manufacturing Company made public in 1894 that it in-

tended to build a southern mill, treasurer J. Howard Nichols "received numerous letters pressing the claims and setting forth the advantages of various sites." One of the letters received by the Dwight Manufacturing Company came from then–Gadsden mayor, Reuben A. Mitchell, and local businessman Robert Kyle and his son-in-law, James Elliot. These men were the principal founders of the town of Alabama City, located adjacent to Gadsden and incorporated by an act of the state legislature on 16 February 1891. They were also the driving forces behind and key investors in the Alabama City Land and Development Company, created two days later.[21] Robert Kyle had been active in developing the Gadsden area's industrial base since 1887, when he and fourteen investors established the Gadsden Land and Development Company. As noted by historian Robert Eugene Perry, land development companies like those in Alabama City and Gadsden proved themselves important conduits for bringing northern capital to Alabama. These organizations were a means through which local citizens could pool their resources to pay for advertising and promotional publications and to buy and sell large tracts of land. With the objective of facilitating industrialization and urban growth in the greater Gadsden area, Kyle and his associates contacted J. Howard Nichols to bring his attention to the land available in the area. They also pointed out the advantages of Alabama City's access to railroad lines, quality cotton, readily available labor, and potential tax breaks that made the new town an ideal place to situate the Dwight Company's new mill. After a visit to the town, in April 1894 J. Howard Nichols urged the directors of the Dwight Company to seriously consider locating its new mill there.[22]

The Dwight Company's corporate officials, however, perceived Alabama's hours restriction and child-labor law, regardless of the laxity in its enforcement, as a major deterrent. What the owners of Dwight wanted—even more than tax incentives, a potentially large, nearby labor pool, and what appeared to be superior local resources and transportation networks—was the guarantee that it would be located in a state where, unlike Massachusetts, there would be no "interference" with its management in determining who would work and for how long. "Labor agitation was directly the cause which induced us to come south," noted Howard Gardner Nichols. "For the past ten years labor agitators . . . have been weaving a web of oppressive laws around cotton manufacturing industries in Massachusetts till they are almost strangled in its meshes. People here, unacquainted with professional agitation little realize how dangerous it is to the prosperity and welfare of a state."[23]

Why, then, did the Dwight Company build its branch factory in Alabama, the only southern state with recently passed hours and age restriction legislation, rather than in North Carolina, South Carolina, or Georgia? During 1893 and early 1894, treasurer J. Howard Nichols traveled throughout the Carolinas, to

Rome and Atlanta in Georgia, and, finally to the Gadsden area in Alabama to inspect potential locations for Dwight's new mill. Dwight officials dismissed North Carolina as an option because they believed there were too many mills already located there and not enough cotton grown locally to supply them all. They rejected South Carolina because of "oppressive taxation." The decision came down to a choice between Alabama and Georgia, and a Dwight official admitted that "the difference in their advantages was not great."[24] What swayed the Dwight Company's decision to choose Alabama over Georgia were actions taken by the Alabama legislature in 1894.

Reuben A. Mitchell, then mayor of Gadsden, accompanied the Dwight Company's Howard Gardner Nichols to Montgomery during the autumn of 1894 to confer with two men Mitchell later referred to as "my friends." Mitchell's friends were Alabama's governor, Thomas Jones, and the state's governor-elect, William Oates. At this meeting, Mitchell and Nichols lobbied Jones and Oates for the repeal of the state's hours and child-labor law. Upon Nichols's return to Massachusetts, he reported to Dwight's corporate officers that the Montgomery visit was a successful venture. Nichols learned from Alabama's future governor that he also wanted the law abolished so that industrial investments in Alabama would increase. Nichols left the Alabama state house with assurances from the governor-elect of the regulatory statute's repeal.[25]

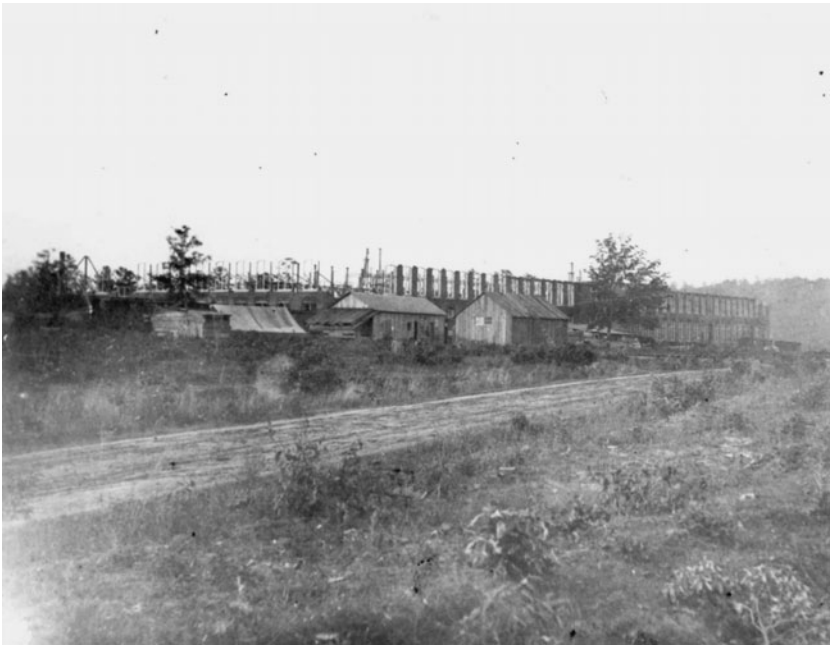
In November 1894, the House Representative of the legislative district covering Gadsden and Alabama City and the State Senator from Jefferson County introduced a bill into the Alabama legislature, "on request" from Governor William Oates, that would repeal the 1887 law "so far as the same related to Etowah county." With approval from the governor, the legislature went one step further and on 5 December 1894 passed a bill that, when signed into law twelve days later, repealed the 1887 statute entirely. "Alabama had been the first state to regulate child labor in 1887," child-labor reformer Irene Ashby would later remark, "and the first to repeal restrictions . . . at the urging of Dwight mill officials from Chicopee, Massachusetts."[26]

Governor Oates was an ardent advocate of Alabama's industrial development. He supported the 1894 reversal of the 1887 law, seeing it as a guarantee that the Dwight Company would immediately begin construction on its mill in Alabama City. He accepted statewide nullification with a firm belief that it would stand as evidence for other New England textile corporations of Alabama's willingness to act in the interests of invested capital. Indeed, as events showed, Alabama was not only willing to pass legislation that favored the owners of textile manufactories, but it was also willing to revoke old laws and prevent the passage of new ones that were unfavorable. After the repeal of the 1887 statute, Howard Gardner Nichols was confident that he and the Dwight Company had the ear of

the governor and the support of a probusiness legislature, acknowledging that the nullification of the hours and child-labor law proved to the Dwight Company "that Alabama was governed in a common sense and economical way, and that we had less to fear here from hostile legislation . . . than in any other southern state."[27]

The citizens of Alabama City and Gadsden looked upon the construction of the Dwight mill not just as a corporate endeavor but as evidence of the "great progressive movement for this region of Alabama," a "conspicuous signal of the faith of capital that is keen and cautious to the last degree to the advantages of the cotton belt for the manufacture of cotton."[28] The Dwight mill was, in short, evidence of the success of local boosters and their state representatives in bringing large-scale manufacturing to the area. Yet, the community perceived this triumph not as an end point, but as a beginning.

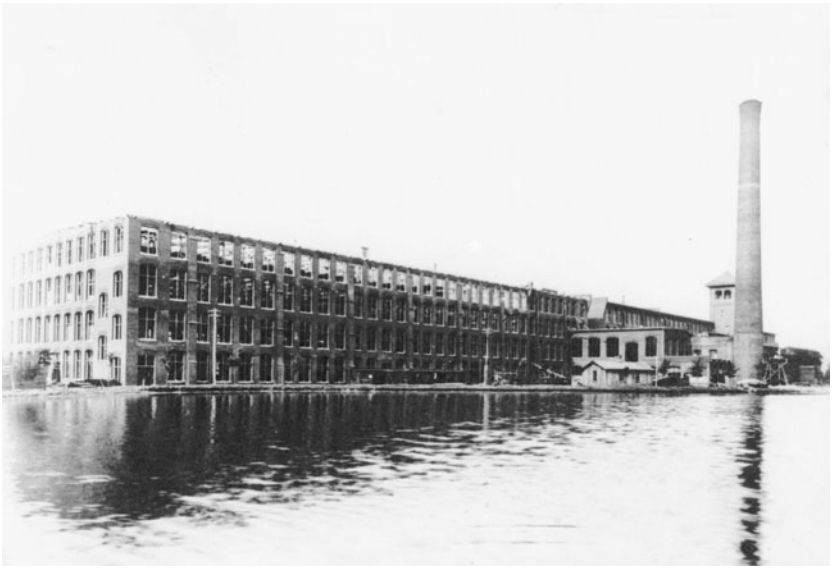
Even while the Dwight mills were under construction, an editorial in the *Gadsden Times-News* reminded readers that "Gadsden wants another [mill] before the Dwight mills are completed and she is going to make the effort." The local newspaper continued an industrialization campaign within its pages through the turn of the century, trying to keep locals' interests focused on attracting investments of textile dollars. The paper's editor used the Dwight mill as an example of the good that industry did for the area. It "has been a blessing to the people of this county, opening up a market all through the year for any produce our farmers have to sell," he proclaimed, adding that it has "infused new and fresh life into all the commercial and business interests of the county, causing existing enterprises to enlarge their capacities and creating a demand for other industries." The Alabama City Land and Development Company, moreover, incorporated the Dwight Company into its real estate sales pitch. "The Dwight Manufacturing Company of Massachusetts has just completed and has now in operation in Alabama City one of the largest cotton mills in the South," an 1896 advertisement announced. " . . . This gives an immense trade and must result in large mercantile establishments being built in the city. . . . Other large manufacturing plants will be erected in Alabama City in the near future. NOW is the time to buy lots." The message conveyed was that industrial development and local and regional progress went hand-in-hand and that since Dwight had helped to create prosperity, additional manufacturing growth would presumably lead to even more.[29] As late as 1903, the *Gadsden Times-News* called upon the city's "commercial club, business men and property owners" to "distribute a few more cotton factories about Gadsden." By 1910, the Gadsden-Alabama City area would be home to numerous medium and large industrial concerns, the largest of which were the Birmingham Slag Company, Alabama City Lumber and Supply Company, Jefferson Lumber Company, the Etowah Packing Com-



The Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill, under construction during the summer of 1895. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

pany, the Gadsden Car Works of the Southern Railroad, and the Alabama Steel and Wire Company. The Dwight Company, however, continued to be the only cotton textile mill in either town.[30]

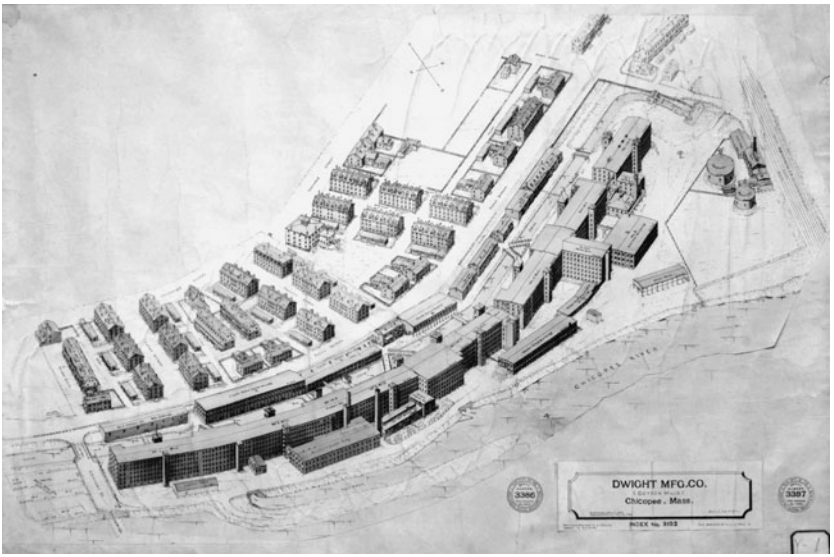
Howard Gardner Nichols spearheaded the Dwight Manufacturing Company's construction of its Alabama City branch plant. After graduating from Harvard University in 1893, Nichols decided to "connect himself with the cotton manufacturing interest in which his father was engaged." He became acquainted with the operation and management of the cotton textile industry through informal training he received during a brief stint at the Great Falls Manufacturing Company in Somersworth, New Hampshire, and, starting in the spring of 1894, under the tutelage of James Cumnock at the Dwight Company's Chicopee, Massachusetts, mill. Nichols was integral in choosing the location for Dwight's southern branch, visiting Alabama and Georgia with his father, Dwight treasurer J. Howard Nichols. Howard Gardner Nichols returned to Alabama in September 1894 to negotiate land and water rights for the company's possible move there. The Dwight Company received a deed to 168 acres from the Alabama City Land and Development Company in November 1894, and



The Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill, viewed across the water reservoir, spring 1896. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

Dwight president T. Jefferson Coolidge made Howard Gardner Nichols agent of the Alabama City operations. As agent, Nichols directed the construction of the mill complex and village and managed the company's southern production schedules when the Alabama City mill opened in February 1896.[31]

Work on the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill began in the spring of 1895. The initial capitalization for the southern mill was $1.2 million dollars.[32] The main mill building measured 130 feet wide, 500 feet long, and 4 stories high. This building housed 27,000 spindles and 800 looms, making it one of the largest textile mills in Alabama at that time. The Alabama City mill complex included a cotton warehouse, a water reservoir holding five million gallons of water and covering two acres, a boiler house and engine rooms, and a brick smokestack two hundred feet in height. The Dwight Company also constructed a mill village of 150 homes to house its initial workforce of 500 employees. The size of the Alabama City mill, however, paled in comparison to the Dwight mill in Chicopee, Massachusetts. When construction began on the southern branch, the Chicopee complex included 7 production buildings that housed 130,000 spindles and 3,400 looms. The Chicopee mill workforce numbered 1,600.[33] But the Dwight Company planned to expand the Alabama City mill if it proved profitable. "We anticipate the surplus earnings of the Dwight



Aerial view of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee, Massachusetts, mill complex and tenement houses from a 1900 survey drawing. (Courtesy Edward Bellamy Memorial Association, Chicopee, Massachusetts)

Manufacturing Co. will very likely be expended here," declared Agent Nichols during the spring of 1895, "and not in Massachusetts."[34]

The Alabama City mill showed a profit for the Dwight Manufacturing Company slightly over a year and a half after the start of production in February 1896, and it continued to do so in the following years.[35] In December 1897, Louis A. Aumann, agent of the Dwight mill in Chicopee, told treasurer J. Howard Nichols that he was "pleased to see the showing" of the Alabama City mill, adding that he was "Very glad to see that we are not as badly off as some of the other [Massachusetts] Co[mpanie]s."[36] In his 1898 testimony before the Massachusetts Legislative Labor Committee, William Lovering, treasurer of the Whittenton Mills of Taunton, Massachusetts, and a future treasurer of the Dwight Manufacturing Company, attributed Dwight's ability to make profits during the depression years of the 1890s to the fact that it had a branch plant in Alabama. "Southern mills opened by Northern capital, in several cases as 'dependencies' of Massachusetts corporations," he pointed out, "earned dividends upon their capital stock during 1897, while the Northern ones failed to do so." True to Howard Gardner Nichols's prediction in 1895, after rebuilding mills 3 and 4 in 1871, mills 1 and 2 in 1882, and mills 5, 6, and 7 in 1889, the Dwight Company made no large-scale changes or additions to the buildings

of its Chicopee mill complex for the next twenty years. But within a decade, the Alabama City mill had more than doubled its productive capacity. By 1905, Dwight's southern mill housed 1,800 looms and 60,000 spindles and employed 1,000 workers.[37]

While the citizens of the Gadsden area initially welcomed the Dwight Manufacturing Company to the locale with open arms, company managers knew that capitalizing on a probusiness atmosphere that welcomed new industrial enterprises was one thing, but recruiting a workforce and keeping the goodwill of the townspeople was quite another. Practicality led the Dwight Manufacturing Company to build homes in Alabama City that employees could rent from the company. In 1891, fewer than fifty people lived within the city limits of Alabama City. Construction of the Dwight-owned houses occurred because "four houses represented the size of the territory . . . occupied by the Dwight Co." when the factory's construction commenced in 1895. There was nowhere nearby to accommodate the arrival of hundreds of mill workers and their families. Yet, in order to maintain favor within the locale, the Dwight Company needed not only to provide gainful employment and housing for the Coosa Valley's "mountain farmers" who came to work in the mill, but they needed to attend to their "welfare" as well. To many residing in the Gadsden area, this welfare was not limited to "good wages" but also applied to the "social and intellectual welfare of the community at large." By far, Dwight's workforce constituted the largest single population of industrial workers in the county, and the leading citizens of the community expected the Dwight Company to mold their operatives not only into efficient millhands but also into "respectable" members of society. They wanted a tangible reassurance that their town would not be tainted by the class strife and social demoralization thought to be endemic in other industrialized regions.[38]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company used a twofold strategy in its attempt to assure the greater Gadsden community that they had nothing to fear from the issue of class strife. First, the company represented itself in the local press as exceptional, as one that, unlike most New England textile corporations, had a long history of labor peace. The Dwight Company fraudulently told the readers of the *Gadsden Times-News* that any trepidation was unnecessary because labor-management conflict "does not cut much of a figure with us, for the Dwight Co., at least during the past twenty years, has never had a strike." In addition to public pronouncements such as this, the Dwight Company constructed a "model mill village" in Alabama City. Often referred to by locals as "Dwight City," the village became the centerpiece of an ongoing public relations campaign with the residents of the greater Gadsden area. The Dwight Company touted Dwight City as a credible safety valve for the kind of class divisions and discord that was

"Dwight City," Alabama City, Alabama, ca. 1896. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

increasingly prevalent throughout the industrialized North and West. Management contended that Dwight City would endear the company to its workers as a benefactor, the provider not only of jobs and shelter, but also of recreation, education, and religion. Dwight City created the perception within the wider community that the Dwight Company was interested in more than profit, that "unlike most corporations it has a soul."[39]

Because of his day-to-day presence in Alabama City and the greater Gadsden area, the mill's agent, Howard Gardner Nichols, became the face of the Dwight Manufacturing Company there. He quickly ingratiated himself to community members and his employees came to equate the Dwight Manufacturing Company and the offerings it provided through the mill village with him, not with an impersonal, New England corporate entity. While the association of a single individual with a corporation was a common phenomenon, it had special significance for the Dwight Company.[40] The senior-most management of the Dwight Company arrived in the Gadsden area as outsiders. Locals welcomed them but they were outsiders to the community nonetheless. This, coupled with the fact that the agent of the mill was a New Englander, undoubtedly introduced an

element of skepticism into the attitudes of some Gadsdenites about the future of cordial relations with the owners of the new cotton mill.

According to M. F. Foster of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association, "The New England man when he went South often made himself generally obnoxious by telling the operatives and others how they did things up North." Howard Gardner Nichols, however, curried favor with the civic leaders of the Gadsden community through his personal planning and direction of the construction of Dwight's mill village. "Mr. Nichols' Yankee notions," quipped the editor of the local newspaper, coupled with "the sweet influences of his happy southern environments" guaranteed that the Dwight Company would "come to the front and be an exemplar of urban thrift and comeliness."[41] Using Dwight City as a tool, Nichols successfully cultivated an image of himself as a prudent businessman *and* as a community benefactor, as an enterprising northerner *and* a paternalistic southerner.

Historians have established that company paternalism was not something uniquely southern, even though southern mill village paternalism often distinguished itself by the degree of its personalism and noblesse oblige. Historian Douglas Flamming defined company paternalism, often used interchangeably with the terms corporate paternalism, industrial paternalism, and welfare capitalism, as "institutionalized company policies intended to extend nonwage benefits to workers, to create an identifiable corporate culture, or to regulate the living environment of the workers."[42] The Dwight Company did not overtly practice corporate paternalism at its Chicopee mill, but it did, however, utilize paternalism in the form of the mill village at its Alabama City site as an integral part of an overall national corporate strategy. The Dwight Company embraced corporate paternalism at its Alabama City mill, not because there was something particularly "southern" about the nature of Dwight's corporate practices or of its owners, but because it was an instrument for maintaining positive community relations, a useful tool for labor recruitment, and a means through which it hoped to maintain stable labor-management relations. These were all necessary elements in the successful operation of its southern branch plant, the profits of which were vital to sustaining the economic health of the entire company. Dwight City owed its existence, in large part, to the fact that it was, first and foremost, fiscally prudent. The nexus of the Dwight Company's corporate paternalism in Alabama City was the movement of capital from New England to the South.

"I could not be happier," Howard Gardner Nichols wrote to his sister in April 1896, "for it would not be possible to find an equally interesting and absorbing occupation." Referring to his mill village, he continued, "It gives a chance for business and philanthropy . . . I shall not want to come away until my ideal is

reached." Nichols said that Dwight's village, within which he served as mayor and where he saw himself as both master and protector, would have "ample" public schools, a "handsome" church, a public library, and "cottages" for the millhands that were each painted different colors and had garden spaces so that there would be an "absence of monotony that is often characteristic of the homes of operatives about cotton factories." Nichols added that he would also see to the safety and decency of his workers by banning concealed weapons and saloons from the village. His goal was to create "a model manufacturing town where not only the manufacture of cotton goods would be carried out in the most advanced manner but where the people would find work with pleasant surroundings in the day and comfort and rest in their homes at night."[43]

Nichols, however, would not see the completion of his model village or the long-term part it would play in the company's southern operation. On 20 May 1896, while supervising the installation of an electric generator at the mill, the scaffolding holding the generator collapsed. The machinery and scaffolding fell on Nichols, leaving him with severe internal injuries. After what appeared to be a successful emergency surgery, a week later doctors moved Nichols to Atlanta to recuperate. He died there on 23 June 1896 at the age of twenty-five.[44]

"All Gadsden was thrown into a state of sorrow," reported the *Gadsden Times-News* upon learning of Nichols's death, as he "was a young man who had endeared himself to the people of this city. . . . Gadsden feels that she has lost one of her best and most honored citizens whose loss the city mourns." Extant sources do little to reveal the true opinions of Dwight's Alabama City workers toward Howard Gardner Nichols and their lives in Dwight City during his time there. Numerous historians, however, have rejected the notion that southern textile operatives at the turn of the century accepted company philanthropy unquestioningly and felt total deference toward their employers. These studies show that southern cotton-mill workers often negotiated the bestowal and meaning of company philanthropy, using the system of mill village paternalism to their own ends.[45]

Yet the outpouring of emotion from friends and the civic leaders of Gadsden and Alabama City in the wake of Nichols's death underscored their values, their social and class assumptions, and how they regarded Nichols as both a businessman and a person. "I believe the Lord called Gardner to the wonderful work he has achieved in the South," one wrote, "to be the helper of hundreds of toiling men . . . to manifest to them how rich, deep, and full an earthly life can be through earnest, faithful . . . work." His efforts in Alabama City, said another, "far more revealed the Christ of divine love than the master of capital and the executor of plans for manufacture and money-making." Nichols was, in these views, a benevolent paternalist, a man who strove to improve the

lives of those who came to live and labor in Dwight City. The civic elite of the Gadsden area did not question what they saw as his and their social and moral superiority to the men, women, and children who found employment in Dwight's Alabama City mill. They praised Nichols for the fact that he awakened "higher aspirations" in his workers and "taught them how to live." Community leaders mourned him because his death interrupted the work of "elevating . . . to a higher plane" the "thousand souls who looked to him as employer and protector." Business leaders in the community, moreover, regarded him "as a young man of high character, earnestness, and great capacity for affairs." Then-mayor Reuben Mitchell remembered Nichols as "a leader in his chosen line of business . . . *one of us*."[46] To the commercial elite and political officials of the community, Nichols had proven himself. At the time of his death, he was not a stranger or a New Englander. He was a philanthropist and community leader. He was one of them and a valued partner in the ongoing crusade to generate local and regional prosperity through industrial enterprise.

In the years following Howard Gardner Nichols's death, expansion of his model village and the careful cultivation of positive relations between the company and civic leaders of the community continued. "I feel like I want to see everything carried out like Gardner had planned," Charles H. Moody, superintendent of the Alabama City mill, wrote to Nichols's father during the spring of 1896. "I am willing to work hard and long to see this mill become a grand success because he had so planned to have it." But a potential break in the cordial relations between the Dwight Company and the greater Gadsden area occurred shortly after Howard Gardner Nichols's death. Charles H. Moody had accompanied Nichols to Alabama City from Chicopee and worked as his right-hand man through the mill's construction and first months of operation. Although Moody took over the agent's responsibilities at the Alabama City mill after Nichols's death, Dwight's corporate officers felt that Moody was not yet experienced enough to fill this position permanently. Within a month, the company's directors settled on Osmon B. Tilton, a manager from the Exposition Cotton Mills in Atlanta, as Nichols's replacement.[47]

Tilton, however, proved inept in his duties and the confidence that Dwight's directors had in their new hire rapidly waned. Tilton's attempts to replace Moody as well as other mill managers hired by Howard Gardner Nichols with a managerial regime of his own met with recrimination from the company's top administrators. J. Howard Nichols also received a barrage of complaints from local cotton brokers and merchants about Tilton's lack of tact and his circumvention of established middlemen in buying raw cotton and locally selling Dwight-made goods. From a public relations standpoint, Tilton was a liability.

In 1999, the Etowah County Historical Society placed a historical marker on the property of the Howard Gardner Nichols Memorial Library describing Nichols as "Scholar, Engineer, Industrialist, Naturalist, Humanitarian." The library is located at the corner of Winona Avenue and Coolidge Circle in Gadsden, Alabama. (Photograph by the author)

Unwilling to further jeopardize the company's meticulously developed public image within the community, company directors discharged Tilton. Within six months of Tilton's arrival in Gadsden in July 1896, the company had hired in his stead Gadsden's former mayor and long-time Dwight ally, Reuben A. Mitchell.[48]

Relations between the company and the community quickly got back on track and stayed that way. "Everything at Mills seems to be going nicely," Charles Moody reported to Edward P. Nichols, Dwight's assistant treasurer, within a month of Mitchell's hire. "Mr. Slocum paid us a visit . . . [and] expressed himself as well pleased with the Cloth, and the way things are going. Thinks the Village and Mill is just 'Out-of-Sight'." In 1898, the company began constructing an addition to the mill and more housing in Dwight City. Mitchell conveyed his approval of the project to treasurer J. Howard Nichols, noting he was "glad because Gardner wished to increase the size of the mill." The Dwight mill village, and "the benefits Gardner planned for his help," he added, would "stand as a monument . . . of which any man should feel proud."[49] By 1906, within a decade of when production started at Dwight's Alabama City mill, the mill village included, in addition to the mill and four hundred houses for Dwight's operatives, six stores, two school buildings, a church, the Howard Gardner Nichols Memo-

rial Library, an emergency first-aid station, a bowling alley, a bathhouse, a baseball field where the "Dwights" played home games, and a bandstand where the "R. A. Mitchell Brass Band" gave free weekly concerts. The local press publicly praised Reuben Mitchell and the Dwight Company in 1906 for their ongoing "interest in the advancement of the business, the betterment of the village and the general growth and prosperity of the community."[50]

Dwight's management initially used Dwight City as a corporate tool meant to provide houses for its workforce and simultaneously facilitate good relations between the company and the wider community. By 1898, Dwight's mill village took on an added significance as the company increasingly used it as a way to recruit and maintain a stable, experienced workforce. At the end of the Civil War and through the remainder of the 1860s, demand for cotton was high, especially by the cotton textile mills of the Northeast, and southern cotton farmers received high prices for their crops. This situation would change when the numbers of farmers engaged in cotton cultivation steadily rose through the 1870s and 1880s, increasing the amount of cotton on the market and driving down prices. Still, cotton remained one of the few commodities southern farmers could raise to secure credit in the cash-poor, post–Civil War South. Cotton prices continued to fall steadily through the early 1890s. In 1894, cotton that cost farmers ten cents a pound to grow and bring to market only yielded five-cent prices when sold. It would be a decade before cotton prices returned to the levels seen in the early 1880s.[51]

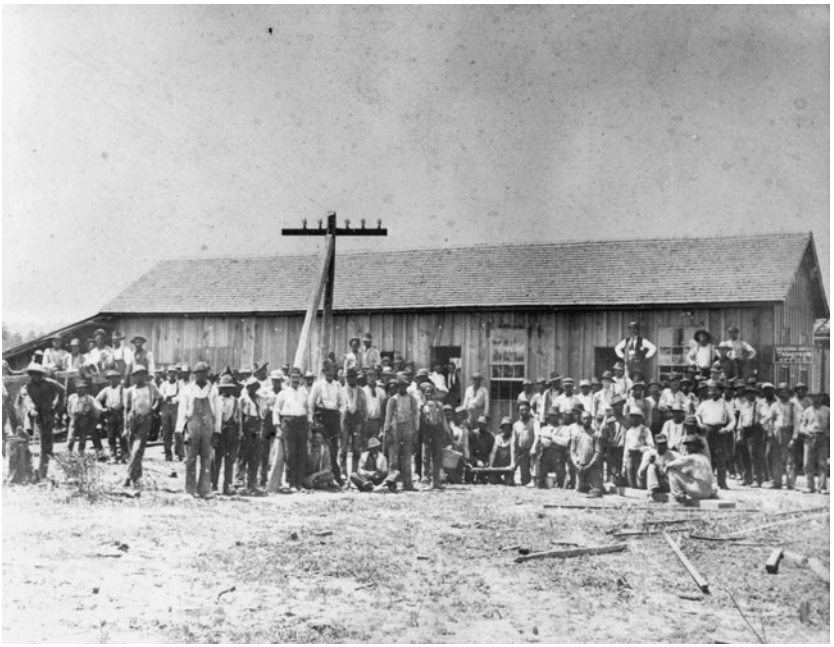
In fact, through the late 1890s these conditions of low cotton prices prevailed throughout the region and white labor was readily available to managers of southern cotton textile mills. Many southern cotton farmers, including those living in Alabama's Coosa Valley, were mired in a cycle of debt. But there were just enough years when cotton prices appeared to be rising interspersed among those years when prices fell again to keep many southern farmers engaged in cotton cultivation in the hopes that they would earn enough with the next season's crop to pay their creditors in full. The Dwight Manufacturing Company began operations at its Alabama City branch plant at a time when local farming families increasingly embraced working in nearby manufactories as a strategy through which they might find escape from their economic woes. As late as December 1897, the textile industry press reported "4 and 5 cent cotton has run the small tenants off the farms, like rats leaving a sinking ship." Exacerbated by the overall economic depression that lingered throughout the nation, "the result is that the cotton mills at North Alabama are glutted with help."[52]

Cotton prices rebounded at the turn of the century and, despite intermittent bad years, they remained stable at around ten cents a pound. Throughout these somewhat prosperous years for cotton cultivation during the first two decades

of the twentieth century, many potential mill workers continued to farm and some mill families returned to the land. "The South needs operatives and needs them badly," noted a 1905 report issued by the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, adding that "they have been forced to draw operatives from the farms but now that these farmers are returning to agriculture in considerable numbers, the scarcity is growing every day." Although plentiful labor continued to be a selling point for boosters trying to secure investments of northern textile money, the reality was that the boom of southern textile mill building during the 1890s, the expansion of existing mills by the turn of the century, and the rebounding of cotton prices had caused a labor crunch. By 1900, these conditions forced southern mill owners to actively seek out and recruit workers from as far as 250 miles away.[53]

The regional practice of not hiring black workers to fill manufacturing positions in textile mills further aggravated the southern labor supply shortage at the turn of the century. Even before a scarcity of available workers became a serious issue at Dwight's southern mill, Alabama City agent Osmon B. Tilton made clear to the company's corporate officers in 1896 that they should not even consider hiring black operatives. According to Tilton, doing so would only "cause problems" by conflicting with "certain 'color ideas' liable to be brought out when colored help are employed permanently in a mill." The trade press depicted white southerners' potential reactions to the widespread use of black labor in southern textile mills as "a fire . . . that all the waters in the Mississippi will never be able to put out." Tilton acknowledged "the disgust of any northern man when he first comes into contact with these features," but would not be swayed from his opinion. The Dwight Company followed regional patterns and only hired white operatives and employed only a very small number of African Americans in nonmanufacturing jobs at its Alabama City mill. Tilton referred to "periodical washing" of the mill that was done by black employees but not needing to "arrange any special accommodations" within the mill village for black workers because "the number we employ here will be limited to one or two families." Even when labor shortages at Dwight became problematic during the first decade of the twentieth century, the company wanted to avoid conflict with its workers and the wider community and did not hire black operatives. They stuck to this policy even though black operatives could have been, according to the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association, "an important factor in solving the labor question" for mills throughout the Piedmont South.[54]

It was within the context of ongoing labor recruitment for the Alabama City mill that the Dwight Company began to use Dwight City primarily as a means of attracting and maintaining its southern workforce. "A mill manager wonders why the best class of operatives will not stay, while other mills have no trouble



Although the Dwight Manufacturing Company did not employ African Americans as operatives at its Alabama City mill, nearly all of the men who constructed the mill between 1895 and 1896, pictured above on a lunch break, were black. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

keeping them," observed the editor of the *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*. "We cannot expect our people to live contented in hovels. . . . A hundred dollars spent on the mill village every few years . . . will prove a profitable investment."[55] The message sent to the owners of southern textile mills was that a poorly kept mill village contributed to discontent among the workforce and labor turnover, which in turn created a day-to-day shortage of operatives and led to idle spindles and looms. Additionally, constantly having to train new workers and retrain those from other mills was a time-consuming and costly proposition. With an eye on the bottom line, the Dwight Company tried to create the perception that work and life in Dwight City was the best of any mill village in the South.

Through the turn of the century, the Dwight Company employed W. T. McCord, a Gadsden area circuit court judge, to aid in the labor recruitment for the Alabama City mill. Charged with seeking "the most promising prospective employees," McCord regularly traveled through the rural sections around Gadsden

trying to attract workers to Dwight City. "[I]t was a judge, old Judge McCord, come [to Jackson County] in a buggy, ridin' in the countryside tryin' to find help for this mill," former Dwight employee Burns Cox remembered of how his father, three uncles, and two aunts came to work at the Alabama City mill. "So he talked to 'em and told 'em if they's come down, move down there, they'd pay for all their transportation, set 'em up, give 'em a house to live in, and they could pay their bills back whenever they got able." Another of McCord's tried and true methods to draw workers to the Dwight mill was to initiate a marble game and "inspire listeners with stories about Alabama City, Dwight, and the future of the textile industry." McCord portrayed Dwight's village as "a modern . . . housing development built by the company" and this description was a key selling point in all of his pitches to prospective employees.[56]

In addition to the use of labor agents and face-to-face contact, around 1905 the Dwight Manufacturing Company also published and distributed *Alabama City: Its Location and the Advantages It Offers the Workingman.* This brochure, meant to attract operatives to the Dwight mill, was remarkably similar to the booster literature published by local civic groups during the 1880s in their attempts to attract investments. According to the company, the purpose of the booklet was to show that the "Dwight Manufacturing Company pays the best wages, has the best mill village, a splendid mill, and everything for the convenience and comfort of its employees." The pamphlet noted that Dwight City's houses were "elegant and attractive . . . renting for one dollar per room per month," wages were "paid in cash," wood and coal were available "at lowest current prices," the climate was "crisp, invigorating, and health giving," and the city's schools, library, and recreational facilities were second to none. The pamphlet guaranteed interested workers that the mill had "the best machinery obtainable." Moreover, they "would find employment . . . pleasant" because of the "latest construction" of the mill buildings, the constant supply of "free ice water in the mill," and because "department heads are competent and reasonable men."[57]

The pamphlet, presumably, was a successful labor recruitment tool as the Dwight Company published a brochure similar to *Alabama City* for its Chicopee mill around 1915. *Chicopee, Massachusetts: A Description of Working Conditions* informed potential employees that Chicopee was located within a short trolley ride from Springfield and Holyoke, that it was a town with "well-paved and sewered streets," a "well-organized Police and Fire Department," a "model" free public library, public playgrounds, schools "unequalled in the State," and "many handsome churches" where "every one can worship in his or her own way with his or her own country folks." The pamphlet boasted that employment

A recently constructed company-owned home in Dwight City, described as "elegant and attractive . . . renting for one dollar per room per month." (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

at the Dwight Manufacturing Company meant a workweek of only fifty-four hours with a "half-holiday" on Saturday afternoons, mills of "the very latest style of construction," looms "of the latest designs," free medical care at the company dispensary, and "comfortable brick and frame houses" located near the mill.[58]

The similarity of the content and purpose of the promotional brochures meant to attract workers to the Dwight Company's northern and southern mills was not the only interregional parallel in the company's labor recruitment and maintenance schemes. In fact, to supply its Alabama City mill with workers, the Dwight Manufacturing Company from early on blended southern labor customs, like not hiring black operatives, with recruitment strategies that management first utilized in Chicopee but that proved applicable and useful in Alabama as well. As such, while Dwight expanded the scope of its production into the South, it also did so with regard to company policies relating to labor recruitment and maintenance. The passage of regulatory labor laws continued to occur at the state level, and union organization within the cotton textile indus-

"Comfortable . . . frame houses" owned by the Dwight Manufacturing Company in Chicopee, Massachusetts, on "Dwight Terrace," a hillside overlooking the mill complex. The majority of the Dwight Company houses in Chicopee were brick row houses located across the street from the mill. (Courtesy Edward Bellamy Memorial Association, Chicopee, Massachusetts)

try remained regional at best. Yet by the turn of the century, interregional companies like Dwight had already nationalized production and corporate policies that inexorably linked the northern and southern branches of the industry.

From the beginning of its operations in Alabama City, however, the company rejected the idea of hiring workers for the southern mill who had experience working at its Chicopee facility. It would not transfer workers to Alabama City who were accustomed to the shorter hours, higher wages, and better working conditions in the Massachusetts mill. The superintendent of the Alabama City mill, Charles Moody, admitted in 1896 that "northern men would be better," but the reality was that the Dwight Company "would have to pay them considerably more" than southerners or immigrants with no work history in New England mills. Skilled New England textile workers also had a long history of union affiliation. By 1903, the city of Chicopee had textile unions representing an estimated two thousand mulespinners, loomfixers, weavers, carders, slasher-tenders, nappers, and drawing-in hands. Dwight did not want the labor organizations and activism found in New England to migrate with workers transferred from Chicopee to Alabama City. Dwight management wanted "nothing of this kind" because it saw unionization as something that would "seriously retard Cotton Mill progress" and threaten their managerial prerogatives at the mill.[59]

The Dwight Company, though, did use foreign recruitment networks, which

drew workers into its Chicopee mill, to attract immigrant labor to its southern plant as well. Through the early 1880s, the Dwight Company employed the services of labor recruiters to convey workers from Canada and abroad to Chicopee, often paying for travel-related expenses that the new hires would then pay back from wages earned in the Dwight mill. The passage of the Foran Act in 1885, however, circumscribed Dwight's use of labor agents abroad as this federal statute made illegal the importation of labor to the United States and leveled penalties against employers who did so with the expectation that the workers would repay transportation costs through their employment. Dwight management did not abandon the use of labor agents entirely, but it began advertising in newspapers in the northeast and overseas as well as with foreign consulates to stimulate interest and bring new immigrants to its mill. The company also relied increasingly on word-of-mouth marketing from current employees to friends and family members.[60]

As early as 1895, Howard Gardner Nichols contacted the Italian consulates in New Orleans, Norfolk, and Mobile in the hopes of attracting immigrant workers to the new Alabama City mill. But few immigrants would make Alabama City in particular and southern mill villages in general their destinations upon arrival in the United States. The low wages paid in southern mills offered little monetary incentive to foreign-born workers to locate in the Piedmont. Ethnic and familial networks that existed throughout the industrialized Northeast functioned effectively to direct immigrants into particular towns and industries there but, with native whites dominating the labor force in southern mills, these channels were virtually nonexistent in southern textile mill villages. The Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor found that of the 156 workers who arrived in the United States in 1904 seeking work in the textile industry, the destination of only one of them was Georgia; the remaining 155 went to Massachusetts.[61]

It would not be until 1906 that the first immigrant workers would take jobs in Dwight's southern mill. During the spring of 1906, the company brought to its Chicopee mill Greek workers to "take the places of . . . striking Poles." Twenty-two of this contingent continued on to Gadsden where in August the *Gadsden Daily Times-News* discussed their arrival. Gadsden had Polish, German, Italian, and Mexican workers "scattered among the industrial plants," so the community was accustomed to immigrant workers living in the area. The appearance of immigrant textile operatives the paper noted, nonetheless, was "something that has never happened before . . . something extraordinary," especially in light of the fact that many southern mill owners were reluctant to hire immigrant workers.[62] In February 1907, the U.S. district attorney charged the Dwight Manufacturing Company with violations of federal contract labor law

for the importation of these Greek workers to Chicopee and Alabama City. The company ultimately settled the suit out of court in 1914 and paid a fifty thousand dollar fine.[63] But in spite of this legal trouble, the fact remained that the Dwight Company reaped a twofold benefit through its interregional mills. The lower costs of southern production gave the Dwight Company an advantage over its New England competitors, and having an immigrant labor recruitment channel vis-à-vis its Chicopee mill was a benefit the company enjoyed that most southern mills did not.

The problem of the "roving disposition" of southern mill operatives complicated the Dwight Company's attempts not only to recruit workers but keep them in the company's employ. Many Piedmont cotton-mill workers frequently left a mill to make a brief return to the land, or quit in search of higher wages, better housing, and improved working conditions elsewhere. In Alabama City, there was "a systematic exodus . . . in the summertime," according to Reuben Mitchell, as "the mill population in this section seem very much given to changing base frequently." By autumn, Mitchell was answering "on an average of ten to twenty letters a week from people" who wanted work at the Dwight Company. Leaving a mill, moreover, was also a way operatives could show disapproval of their current living or employment situation. In the absence of widespread union organization and viable institutional outlets through which millhands could address their grievances, leaving a job was often the most practical means of individual protest.[64]

Quitting a mill was not a uniquely southern phenomenon but rather one seen among textile workers in both the North and the South. To battle against it, the Dwight Company established clear penalties applicable to all of its workers for leaving one's job without due notice, regardless of whether they worked in Massachusetts or Alabama. Anyone who failed to observe the requirement of giving two-weeks notification to the overseer of the department in which they worked before leaving the company's employ would "forfeit to the Company the amount of two weeks wages . . . deducted from whatever amount may remain unpaid." All employees who left the company "before the expiration of the time of his or her engagement, without consent of the Company, and without good and sufficient cause," would not be "entitled to receive or recover his or her wages then remaining unpaid in the hands of the Company."[65]

The Dwight Company, too, used these regulations to combat the practice of "stealing help." Although referred to by the trade press in 1899 as "about the worst evil existing among the cotton mills of the South," the enticement of labor from one mill to another, often with promises of higher wages and better working and living conditions, was common in mill towns above and below the Mason-Dixon Line. In Chicopee and in Alabama City, the Dwight

Company was both a perpetrator and a victim of this practice.[66] The dearth of experienced millhands in the greater Gadsden area compared to a relative glut of textile operatives in the towns surrounding Chicopee, however, made labor poaching a particularly vexing issue for Dwight's management in Alabama City. Within two months of opening the mill, a Dwight labor agent attempted in April 1896 to recruit 450 operatives from those on strike at the Eagle and Phenix Mills located across the state border in Columbus, Georgia. The agent, F. C. Foy, was marginally successful and brought over one hundred operatives to Alabama City. But, when Reuben Mitchell became agent of the mill less than a year later, he found himself "constantly annoyed" by the efforts made by competing mills to steal help from the Alabama City mill, especially those of the Avondale Mill in Birmingham, which he said took "the heads of departments in our mill" and provided "transportation to our people whenever they can get them to move."[67]

Preventing the Avondale Mill and other companies from stealing help was of particular interest to Dwight's management, and in Alabama City the company had tools at its disposal to do this. Underscoring the level of influence the Dwight Company did not have within the city of Chicopee but had and exploited in Alabama City, it was one of several southern mills that kept "an officer on the premises who has the full power to arrest any person found 'tampering' with the help." In Alabama City as well as in mill towns throughout the South, local government ordinances banned the enticement of labor from one mill to another and imposed stiff penalties on those convicted of violating them. When J. M. Howard of Meridian, Mississippi, attempted to convince workers at Dwight's Alabama City mill to leave the company's employ in 1906, local officials arrested him, fined him one hundred dollars, and sent him to the city chain gang to work off his charges. The Dwight Company asserted that the treatment of labor agents like Howard would ensure that "one such experience is sufficient to deter others from following in the same footsteps." By 1911, Alabama, like North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, had a state law requiring agents who solicited laborers for employment to be licensed. The cost to procure a license in Alabama was five hundred dollars for each county in which the labor agent intended to work. An Alabama City ordinance charged an extra one-hundred-dollar fee for any labor agent who wished to be licensed there.[68]

Despite the promises of labor agents or depictions in promotional literature meant to entice new workers and retain old ones, in reality, life in the employ of the Dwight Manufacturing Company was often dominated by the company. In Alabama City in particular, the Dwight Company expected its employees to conform to standards that the company determined were necessary for "right thinking and right living." In keeping with Howard Gardner Nichols's original mandate for the town, the company continued to ban the sale of alcohol

The Dwight Manufacturing Company's cotton textile mill and village in Alabama City, ca. 1900. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

and prohibited gambling. It also sponsored recreational activities for its operatives with the stated intention "to provide for them before any mischief can be introduced by outside influences." The Dwight Company paid the salaries of the church ministers, sponsored lecture series at the local lyceum, and determined what books and newspapers would be allowed at the town's library and reading room. With a focus on shaping the children who would likely be the next generation of Dwight operatives, the company contributed liberally to the maintenance of the city school and Dwight representatives selected the teachers.[69]

Indeed, the Dwight Manufacturing Company made sure that its allies and men associated with its management were in charge of Alabama City's school board and the town government, which consisted of the mayor and a council made up of four aldermen representing each of the city's four wards. When a group of Dwight workers attempted to organize an opposition ticket in the local government elections of 1899, Reuben Mitchell warned them that the "local representatives of the company" as well as the corporate officers in Boston were "bitterly opposed" to their endeavor. Bearing out AFL president Samuel Gompers's observation that a "corporation who controls the stomachs of its

working men comes mighty near to controlling their votes," Reuben Mitchell squelched the opposition by "letting the advocates go." Ultimately, Charles Maguire, Dwight's accountant, won the mayoral race and four members of Dwight's upper management, including Superintendent Charles Moody, became the city council.[70]

The Alabama City mill village proved itself invaluable to the Dwight Manufacturing Company as it faced the challenges of successfully starting and profitably operating its new southern mill. It initially helped forge positive relations between the community and the company. It evolved into a tool to attract and maintain a steady, well-trained workforce through promises of favorable working and living conditions, but with the company expecting loyal service from its help in return. Dwight City provided the Dwight Manufacturing Company's management with a means of keeping workers from participating in activities unwelcomed by management, such as political dissent or union organizing, activities that might upset Alabama City's company-determined status quo. Maintaining such managerial control became a keenly discussed issue within the southern cotton textile industry during the first decade of the twentieth century when progressive reformers and organized labor began to assail the institution of the southern mill village and the family-labor system that existed within the industry. The Dwight Company built its branch plant in Alabama during the 1890s specifically because worker militancy and state regulations did not impose restrictions on its production schedules or infringe upon potential profits. Through the turn of the century, it would engage in a protracted battle to make certain that it did not lose the advantages it moved to Alabama City to gain.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Small Help"

Unionization, Capital Mobility, and Child-Labor Laws in Alabama

"There have been a number of good families applied to us for work . . . and we have made a practice not to turn away any first class family who wished to come here," the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill agent Osmon B. Tilton wrote to Dwight treasurer J. Howard Nichols in October 1896. "We have made it a point to employ such settled families," Tilton added, "as we know from experience would make . . . good mill hands."[1] As was the practice in the company's Chicopee mill, Dwight management hired entire families to work in various capacities in their Alabama City mill. Unlike Massachusetts, however, Alabama had no state laws mandating minimum ages for hiring children. Managers of the Dwight Company in Alabama City, therefore, could and did employ children who oftentimes were under ten years old. The employment of children—whether officially on the payroll or simply listed as "helpers" to parents or older siblings—at the Dwight mill in Alabama and in manufactories throughout the South was a practice that turn-of-the-century labor unions and, eventually, middle-class reformers sought to regulate through state legislation. In the debates that ensued over state child-labor regulation, manufacturers, state politicians, unionists, and reformers focused their attentions on the textile mill village as institution, the family-labor system, unionization, and capital mobility. While Alabama industrialists fought to keep the advantages that manufacturing cotton cloth in the South offered them, organized labor called for the unionization of southern operatives. And in concert with middle-class reformers, these unionists urged the Alabama legislature to alter the state's laissez-faire status quo.

Throughout the 1890s, skilled New England textile operatives affiliated with the region's craft unions struggled to effectively meet the challenge posed by the lower-cost labor and longer working hours common in the mills of the Piedmont South. In 1890, with the objective of organizing all textile workers into

one nationwide union, Lowell mulespinners, weavers, loomfixers, and carders formed the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW), and they received a charter from the AFL the following year. The NUTW realized that the strength of New England labor unions and the continued advancement of labor standards in New England cotton mills were inexorably tied to the conditions of work that prevailed throughout the southern textile industry. "Wages are low and hours long in the South. They were continually told in Massachusetts their wages must conform," mulespinner Robert Howard told AFL convention delegates in 1895. "No more progress can be made in New England until the Southern situation is improved."[2]

Thus, a primary purpose of the NUTW was to raise southern conditions to northern standards through establishing NUTW locals in mills throughout the South before northern conditions declined to match southern norms. In 1896 the AFL named Robert Howard of Massachusetts and Fred Estes of the Columbus, Georgia, typographical union as organizers for the campaign to unionize southern textile operatives. Organizational infighting and a preference for local autonomy, however, led numerous New England craft unions to withdraw from the NUTW in the mid and late 1890s. During 1896 and 1897, the process of organizing southern textile unions was slow, constantly short of money, and hampered by a lack of support from the New England craft locals that had funds in their treasuries and experienced organizers within their ranks. Between 1898 and 1901, nevertheless, the NUTW led an organizational drive in numerous mill districts throughout the South.[3]

The southern industry press urged manufacturers to resist the National Union of Textile Workers' organizing campaign. "Trade unionism does not flourish in the Southern states. The soil has never proven a fertile one. . . . Now comes news that the New England textile union federation are about to send missionaries through the Southern states," the editor of the *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior* noted. "Their work fell on stony ground before, will it again?" The NUTW did successfully organize locals in the four leading southern textile states of North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. There were an estimated five thousand members in these states, representing about 6 percent of southern textile operatives, at the height of its strength in the fall of 1900.[4] Yet southern manufacturer resistance and antiunion sentiment in textile towns throughout the region were strong.

Southern textile mill managers balked at any attempts by employees and labor union organizers to interfere with their prerogatives to set wages and working hours. To thwart NUTW efforts to organize union locals, cotton textile mill management throughout the region regularly discharged union members and sympathizers and capitalized on the control they could exert within

company-owned villages. This control had many forms, including threatening to replace white operatives with black workers, locking out unions, and intimidating, evicting from company housing, and blacklisting union sympathizers. Unless this state of affairs could be altered, argued one NUTW organizer, "we will Never be able to Organise [*sic*] the South."[5]

Lacking the skilled membership that gave strength to craft unions in New England, especially the mulespinners and loomfixers, the overwhelmingly unskilled southern operatives who joined NUTW-led strikes found that they had little bargaining power and few financial resources to sustain protracted walkouts. The NUTW, without any substantial support from textile unions north of the Mason-Dixon Line, went on to oversee large-scale, but ultimately unsuccessful, strikes in the Horse Creek Valley of South Carolina; in Danville, Virginia; in Durham and Alamance, North Carolina; and in Atlanta, Augusta, and Columbus, Georgia.[6]

The issue of stronger interregional cooperation surfaced again in 1900 among the NUTW unionists of the South and unions representing New England weavers, mulespinners, carders, and loomfixers, which had consolidated themselves into the American Federation of Textile Operatives (AFTO) during the spring of 1900. Fearing that an ongoing conflict between the southern-based NUTW and northern-based AFTO would undermine the strength of all unionized textile operatives, the AFL's national leadership urged the two unions to amalgamate into one. Throughout 1900 and 1901, the two textile unions entered into protracted negotiations with one another and the AFL's executive committee to establish the terms under which they could merge. Despite unresolved questions of union jurisdiction, dues assessments, and whether the NUTW or the AFTO would dominate the leadership of any mutual organization, at a November 1901 conference held in Washington, D.C., they officially joined their constituencies and formed the United Textile Workers of America (UTWA). In the wake of its southern defeats, the NUTW hoped to use the newly created UTWA as a vehicle through which it could finally have the finances and experienced organizers necessary to support a successful southern unionization drive. The NUTW leadership anticipated that a UTWA organizing campaign in the South would create the Piedmont union base necessary to establish national standards for hours, wages, ages, and working conditions throughout the U.S. cotton textile industry.[7]

Meaningful interregional cooperation within the UTWA, however, did not occur. After the failure of a bitterly fought strike in Augusta, Georgia, in 1902 that was led by the UTWA and financed in large part by northern locals, the UTWA's mostly New England constituency considered any future organizing drives in the South as potential wastes of time and money. The UTWA leader-

ship based in Fall River, Massachusetts, decided to pursue the strategy of building strong locals of skilled operatives in the textile centers of the Northeast before engaging in any broad organizing campaign of unskilled southern operatives. In fact, from its founding, the organizing strategy of the AFL focused on craft workers and the power they could exert within the workplace by virtue of their skills. This approach meant that the AFL largely ignored the vast numbers of unskilled workers in U.S. industries. "In order to help them at all," argued UTWA secretary Albert Hibbert in 1903, "we must proceed with some assurance of permanency by securing the cream of the skilled labor." The full-scale retreat of northern unionists from future participation in southern organizing drives meant that southern unionists had to carry on alone and without the vital financial support of the New England locals. Discussions about the feasibility and necessity of organizing southern operatives continued at UTWA annual conventions, but the union did not send an organizer to the South until 1912.[8] Ongoing employer hostility and the booster rhetoric that tied southern industrial development to open shop mills, as well as the regional myopia of New England textile unions and their withdrawal of support from southern organizing efforts, meant that southern textile workers would, in both the short and long term, remain unorganized.

The policy of focusing on skilled workers and shoring up established craft union affiliates meant that the membership of the UTWA remained small and centered in the Northeast instead of in the South, where the most dynamic growth in the textile industry was occurring. Through the turn of the century, the focus of New England textile craft unions remained locally and regionally centered. Unionized weavers at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee mill, for example, protested the hiring of Portuguese workers in 1903, believing that "it was an attempt to drive them out through the importation of cheaper workingmen." But they did not link the strength of their union and the stability of their wage rates to the competition they faced from the company's Alabama City operatives, who labored longer hours and who the company paid less.[9]

Ongoing technological changes also undermined the ability of craft unions, especially the mulespinners, to represent a large number of workers in any mill, North or South. The flow of French Canadian, Polish, Portuguese, and Greek workers into New England mill towns, and the impoverished farming families moving into mill villages throughout the Piedmont South, provided textile mill managers with the majority of the operatives they needed to produce coarse- and medium-grade cotton goods. The large numbers of unskilled and semiskilled immigrants and women who dominated this textile workforce often proved themselves militant unionists during times of labor unrest in individual

mills. Still they found the UTWA unresponsive and they remained predominantly outside the purview of formal organizational activities during times of labor peace. In fact, historians have cited the decentralized nature of the textile industry, the low skill levels required of operatives, and the large proportion of immigrants, women, and children in the textile workforce as factors that undermined the possibility of successful unionization in the cotton textile industry. During the first decade of its existence, the UTWA claimed as members only 1 to 2 percent of the textile workers nationwide.[10]

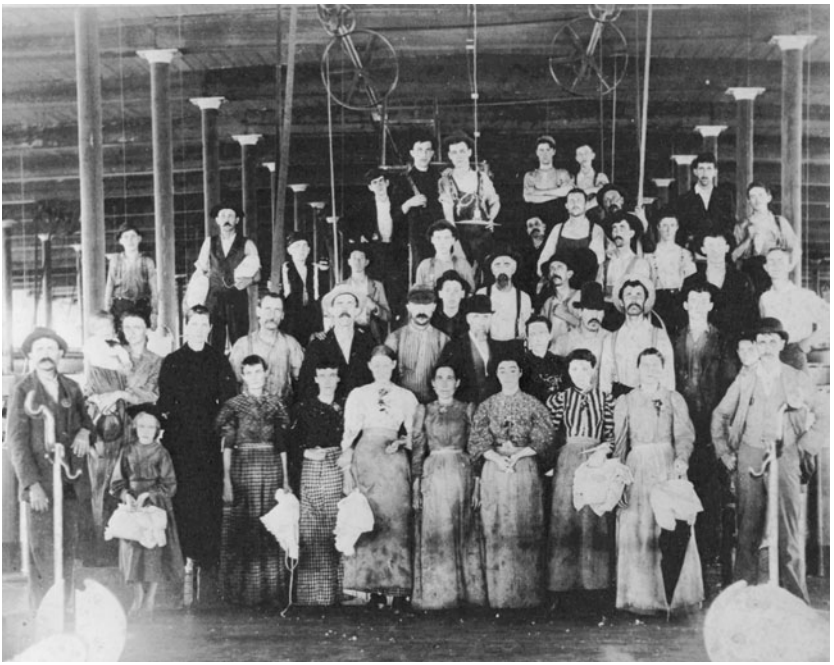
The question of why there were so few unions among southern textile workers has dominated the historiography of southern labor and the southern textile industry. In answering this question, numerous historians have built their arguments on southern exceptionalism, emphasizing the role of mill-village paternalism in undermining unionization and labor strikes, and focusing on differences in the "character" of southern workers compared to their northern counterparts. In these analyses, southern mill-village paternalism serves alternately as a surrogate for the benefits that unions could have provided workers or as a tool used by management to crush any movement for union organization. Moreover, operatives' rural backgrounds, their fierce sense of individualism, pervasive racism, and hostility to outside influences undercut any possibility of successful unionization. More recently, scholars have complicated the paradigm of southern exceptionalism or have done away with it completely by asking new questions, by expanding their analyses of operatives' militancy beyond their participation and membership in national unions, and by looking at the history of southern unionism through the multiple lenses of class, race, and gender. These historians, likewise, have found that southern mill-village paternalism was not simply a system dominated entirely by mill owners but, instead, was characterized by ongoing labor-management negotiations. But when answering the questions of why southern textile workers historically have not joined unions in large numbers and why northern attempts to organize them have failed, the withdrawal of northern unionists' support from southern organizing efforts also have key implications. At the turn of the century, the UTWA's "North first" strategy, which focused on the unionization of skilled workers in New England, left southern textile workers without the financial and moral support necessary to overcome the challenges they faced from the antiunion status quo that dominated the region.[11]

The failed attempts of the NUTW and the UTWA to organize the southern portion of the industry only strengthened the resolve of many unionists to secure the enactment of labor laws in the South and thereby to equalize regional conditions. In Alabama, the national AFL leadership and AFL-affiliated unions were the most outspoken critics of the December 1894 nullification of the 1887

statute that prohibited employing women and children under fourteen years old in any factory or manufacturing business for more than eight hours per day. The argument supporting the repeal of the act, forwarded by manufacturers and their allies in the legislature, was that doing so would entice industrial concerns like the Dwight Manufacturing Company to build industrial establishments in the state, which would then provide gainful employment for poor farming families. Speaking about the act repealing the 1887 law, Samuel Gompers wrote to Jere Dennis, publisher of Alabama's *Labor Advocate*, "I was . . . horrified by this outrageous piece of legislation . . . this crime that had been committed by that legislature in sacrificing young and innocent children to the greed and rapacity of the profit mongers."[12]

The reversal of the 1887 Alabama hours and child-labor statute remained a rallying cry for AFL unionists through the late 1890s. As they sought to replace the voided statute, organized labor used the child-labor issue as the focal point of a critique of the family-labor system on which the textile industry was based and a cornerstone of their argument as to why new state regulations needed to be enacted. "I find little, pale, pinched faced children laboring long hours," said Prince Greene of the NUTW about his travels through southern mill towns in the 1890s; " . . . every member of a family is compelled to give the first and best end of their lives to the manufacturer." For Greene and his fellow unionists, the use of child labor by corporations like the Dwight Manufacturing Company was not only a social abomination but also an economic one. "A man cannot earn high wages from it," a Massachusetts resident remarked about work in the Dwight Company's mills; "his wife must work to support the family, and at an early age the children must join the ranks." Competition from low-cost child labor, the AFL contended, drove down the wages for adult textile operatives, and the low wages paid to these adult cotton-mill workers meant that most families who were reliant on the textile industry for their income had to send their children to work at a young age to contribute to the family economy. Businesses employing children, meanwhile, remained entirely unregulated in the South and reaped large profits.[13]

Textile manufacturers throughout the Piedmont South, however, countered the unionists' claims by noting that children were not always attentive or cost-effective operatives. These mill owners said that a philanthropic desire to offer jobs to poor whites, not avarice, compelled them to employ children. As early as 1897, the Dwight Manufacturing Company instituted a plan at its Alabama City mill of "weeding out the very young." Agent Reuben A. Mitchell recorded in May 1897 that 17 of the 162 employees in the Alabama City mill spinning department were ten and under, instructing overseers "to take no one under ten if it can be avoided." But, Dwight management tolerated the inefficiencies of



Employees, including several children, who worked in the carding room at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill, ca. 1896. The majority of children employed by Dwight at the Alabama City mill during the 1890s and early 1900s worked in the spinning department. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

young operatives because employing children provided the company a means through which they could train and maintain their workforce. "Many points of training must extend through more than one generation," Mitchell's predecessor, Osmon Tilton reminded Dwight's corporate officers, "before we can reproduce neat and skilfull [*sic*] employees." Protestations of their benevolent motives aside, southern mill managers hoped that when these children matured, they would remain in the employ of the company, reside and marry within the company-owned village, and rear the next generation of children who would enter the Dwight mill as their parents had before them.[14]

Southern industrial boosters and textile manufacturers alike, therefore, saw the family-labor system and training textile operatives from childhood as a foundation for the long-term stability of mill workforces and for the region's industrial base as a whole. Mill owners and boosters thus reasoned that any attempts by unionists to challenge the family-labor system or the employment of

children—whether through organizing unions in the South's mills or through state regulatory statutes—had to be resisted. "The South, in maintaining its advantages as a manufacturer . . . in handling its labor question judiciously should seek to reduce to the minimum the influence of the politician in labor legislation," asserted Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record*. "He is a curse. . . . He should be suppressed as far as possible, and along with him . . . the agitator from outside, who seeks to save himself by creating artificial conditions in the South." Organized labor would face the same kind of opposition it encountered in its attempts to unionize southern textile workers as it tried to promote and secure labor legislation in the states of the Piedmont South. Perceived by southern mill owners as agents of northern mills attempting to hamper the success of the southern textile industry, labor organizers and their criticisms of the family-labor system and the overall depression of wages that child labor caused, were not welcomed in mill villages or in southern statehouses. "The operatives of the South are contented," opined one member of the southern textile industry press; " . . . we ask that our Northern friends attend to their own state of affairs and we will attend to ours."[15]

Through the late 1890s as the NUTW worked to organize operatives in southern mills, Alabama unionists lobbied to counter the support textile manufacturers found among the majority of legislators in their state. But lacking the strong base of organized workers found in heavily industrialized states like Massachusetts and the representatives such a base could elect, the Alabama unionists were unable to secure the reenactment of an hours and child-labor law. Child-labor bills introduced into the Alabama state legislature in 1896 and 1897 received scant attention from the public, press, and politicians, and died in committee. "There is a decided opposition on the part of manufacturers in the South to any restrictive labor legislation," the Massachusetts-based Arkwright Club observed in 1897, "and the alertness with which they combine to oppose and discourage it is worthy of attention."[16]

During the 1898–99 session, labor-friendly politicians introduced numerous child-labor bills, including one intended to regulate employment of children under twelve years old and to set ten hours as the maximum workday in the state's mines and factories. Alabama unionists championed this bill; the state's textile manufacturers aggressively fought to prevent its passage. Nevertheless, it passed the Alabama Senate, and Reuben Mitchell reported to Dwight Company corporate officers that although he remained confident that the bill would neither be passed in the House nor signed into law, he expected manufacturers to encounter a "real fight" from trade unionists and representatives supported by them.[17]

Mill managers representing ten cotton manufactories in Alabama and one in Georgia appointed a two-person committee, one of which was Dwight's Reuben Mitchell, to "handle the matter" of the proposed hours and ages restrictions before the Alabama House Committee on Immigration and Labor. The mills represented by Mitchell were the Dwight Manufacturing Company, Anniston Manufacturing Company, Eufaula Cotton Mills, Montgomery Cotton Mills, Tallahassee Falls Manufacturing Company, Coosa Manufacturing Company, Prattville Cotton Mills, Hawthorne Cotton Company, Selma Cotton Mill Company, the Talladega Cotton Factory Company, and the Lannett Mills, located across the Alabama border in West Point, Georgia. Mitchell discovered that Luther Jones of Lee County who introduced the legislation had recently conducted an investigation of the conditions of textile mills in Alabama and Georgia, "that he was in company with Mr. Sam[uel]l Ross of New Bedford . . . studying the labor question," and that he had been in conversation with a man "named Howard, an eastern man and . . . was very intimate with a Mr. Stanley . . . the head of the labor organization in Birmingham." Concluding that Representative Jones was "a district organizer of some labor union" or "perhaps an anarchist in embryo," Mitchell reported to the Alabama manufacturers for whom he lobbied at the statehouse that unflinching opposition to all proposed regulatory legislation was necessary in order to halt "agitation of this character."[18]

The "man named Howard" referred to by Reuben Mitchell was Robert Howard, the mulespinner from Fall River, Massachusetts, whom the AFL appointed as an organizer in 1896 for its southern textile unionization campaign. "Mr. Stanley" was a member of and paid lobbyist for the Birmingham Trades Council, sent to Montgomery to campaign for the pending child-labor legislation. Indeed, organized labor in Alabama sought to cultivate support within the statehouse and among the wider public for the pending labor bills in the Alabama legislature. Samuel Gompers reminded Alabama unionists that "[w]e have a friend and union member in the Alabama Legislature by the name of Luther C. Jones . . . and it is possible that some good may be accomplished, if you will do your duty," urging them to "adopt resolutions and send them to members of the Legislature," a tactic that had worked well in campaigns to enact protective legislation in the Northeast. The state's labor press, meanwhile, couched the proposed child-labor legislation in terms of "human advancement," imploring politicians and the public to "do justice for the poor, helpless children who are not able to help themselves."[19]

In December 1898, however, the Alabama textile lobby succeeded in preventing any substantive debate in the House of Representatives on the matter of age

and hours restrictions. According to Reuben Mitchell, the mill managers' efforts to halt the passage of the legislation were successful because the majority of representatives in both the House and Senate were "all pretty well advised . . . that the cotton manufacturers want no legislation at all along this line." Age and hours statutes would stifle Alabama's industrial growth and lead textile interests to invest in other southern states where such laws were not in effect, the manufacturers argued in their attempt to rally legislators' support, and apathy or indifference toward the passage of regulatory legislation was something Alabama could ill afford. Ironically, the same day that Reuben Mitchell reported to the Dwight corporate officers that another hours bill was "killed in committee," he noted that back at Dwight City "[e]verything went off pleasantly" at a Christmas party held by the company for its employees. "All of the children were very happy upon receipt of their presents," Mitchell said. "Several addresses were made by the mill people, and the Donors were highly complimented and gratefully thanked *for the interest taken in the children.* Think these affairs make very favorable impressions on the operatives."[20]

In spite of their success in preventing the passage of age- and hours-related bills, the leading cotton-mill owners in Alabama decided to employ a full-time lobbyist to watch after their interests at the statehouse, "especially to defeat any legislation similar to the ten hour bill." The Dwight Manufacturing Company agreed to "bear its proper part of this expense." Mitchell, in addition to the lobbyist, remained a presence at the legislature for the Dwight Company because, as he told J. Howard Nichols in December 1898, he had, among others, "four or five . . . personal friends" on the labor committee, "including in this number the chairman." Mitchell and the textile lobby used their influence to stop another bill introduced in February 1899 proposing to outlaw overnight work by children in cotton mills. Reuben Mitchell and the owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company breathed a collective sigh of relief that their antiregulation lobbying efforts at the Alabama statehouse had been successful because "the Legislature . . . having adjourned," Mitchell reminded the corporate officers in Boston, " . . . will not convene again, thank goodness, for two years."[21]

During the nearly two years that the Alabama legislature was in recess after the adjournment of the 1898–99 session, Alabama unions affiliated with the AFL, as well as the AFL's national leadership, continued to work toward the goal of securing labor legislation in Alabama. The defeats of child-labor bills in Alabama during 1898 and 1899 led members of the AFL legislative committee to urge fellow unionists to embrace their "duty to undertake an agitation for the creation of a healthier public opinion—to arouse the conscience of the people." Samuel Gompers, meanwhile, hired Irene Ashby, a British union activist, to conduct a fact-finding investigation of child-labor conditions in the cotton

textile mills located in the state. She managed to create a public awareness of the child-labor issue among groups outside of the working class, which the AFL realized would be necessary for any alteration of the probusiness, antiunion status quo in Alabama. Her study was vital in jumpstarting an interclass crusade in Alabama that sought the eradication of child labor from the state's cotton textile mills.[22]

Irene Ashby's investigation took her to six cities and twenty-four out of forty-three cotton textile mills in Alabama. At these mills, she asked superintendents, managers, operatives, and "persons living in close contact with mill life" dozens of questions. Her goal was to collect information on the conditions of work and the number of children under twelve years old employed at each mill, as well as to survey manufacturers' attitudes regarding state regulation of child labor. From the answers she received and her own personal observations, she reported to the AFL that the average workday in Alabama's mills was over eleven hours, and she estimated that the number of children ages ten to fifteen years in all the mills located in the state comprised 30 percent of the entire textile workforce.[23]

Irene Ashby's 1901 report and her experiences researching it confirmed for the American Federation of Labor leadership the staunch opposition of southern textile manufacturers toward proposed regulatory legislation and organized labor's attempts to secure such laws. Ashby noted that the mill owners who declared themselves strongly against child-labor legislation argued that any attempt made by the state to set limits of when and for how long children could be gainfully employed in manufacturing pursuits was an infringement on parental rights. Industrialists continued this line of reasoning, pointing out that many families, especially poor widows, depended on contributions made to the familial purse from children employed in textile mills. "It is not a question of mill owners desiring to employ the children," the *Manufacturers' Record* noted, "but one resting with their parents and involving the possible loss of the means of livelihood of whole families who are passing from penury to comfort." Southern manufacturers used the destitute conditions in which many mill families had lived on mountain farms as a touchstone to bolster this argument. Although southern textile operatives did not have as high a standard of living as those working in New England mills, this line of reasoning went, they were better off than before. "The whole influence of the cotton mill in the South has been beneficial to the population as a whole," asserted industrialist Edward Sanborn. "It is distinctly a marked civilizing agency as it has given comfortable living and an elevating influence to thousands of families who never before knew anything better than a cabin in the backwoods." Southern textile manufacturers, too, used the mill village as a defense against reformers by publicizing all of the "benefits" that southern textile concerns provided for their employees free of

charge. Because they already voluntarily took care of their employees, they felt state intervention was unnecessary.[24]

Numerous Alabama textile managers said they favored child-labor restrictions but only if other southern states passed similar regulations so as to not undermine their competitive position. This was an argument, Samuel Gompers reminded Irene Ashby, that Massachusetts mill men had used in their fight against the Commonwealth's 1892 fifty-eight-hour law.[25] Many southern textile manufacturers said that they did not necessarily want to hire children but that parents threatened to move to other mills that would employ their sons and daughters. Mill owners also stressed that without an adequate public school system, restrictions on the employment of child labor would likely do more harm than good. "[W]hat is to become of the children until they reach the age when they may find places in the mills?" asked Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record.* "[P]roper facilities are offered hardly in any of the Southern States. . . . [T]he education which the child is receiving in the mill may be better than that which it might derive from attendance . . . [in] poorly-conducted schools," he noted. "The problem is to be settled by reason, not by hysterics." These postulations forwarded by southern textile interests and publicized in the regional industry press, by themselves, had limited value for the manufacturers' antiregulation campaign. Their persuasiveness, however, increased substantially when coupled with attacks on Ashby that disparaged her as an ill-informed sentimentalist, a tool of organized labor, and an outsider working "in the interests of several northern mill owners and corporations . . . jealous of southern development."[26]

Since the late 1890s, organized labor had focused on the issue of protective labor legislation, but it was during Irene Ashby's investigation of Alabama mills that the base of support within the state for child-labor restrictions grew substantially. Through her inquiry, the AFL came into contact with clubwomen and civic and religious leaders who expressed interest in the movement for securing state-mandated child-labor regulations. These men and women, part of a growing cohort in the state who took on the mantle of progressivism, typically lived in urban areas and were members of the commercial and professional middle class that had been a product of Alabama's post–Civil War economic development. Like the state's industrial boosters, these child-labor reformers saw themselves as standard bearers of the New South. Unlike those who wanted commercial development to continue in an unregulated, laissez-faire atmosphere, however, these people believed that state-mandated controls were required if the promise of social progress through economic development touted by the industrial boosters was to become reality. They helped transform state regulation of child labor from being an issue of interest only to organized labor into

one that had an interclass, humanitarian appeal. They made possible an effective anti-child-labor campaign in Alabama, even as many southerners, child-labor reformers and legislators among them, saw organized labor as a potential impediment to the state's industrial and economic growth.[27]

Despite this new support from middle-class groups such as the Alabama State Federation of Women's Clubs, members of the state's Women's Christian Temperance Union and other urban-based reform associations, and the Alabama Ministers' Union led by Edgar Gardner Murphy of Montgomery, no child-labor regulation passed the Alabama legislature in 1901. Again, the Dwight Company's Reuben Mitchell testified at the statehouse in opposition to a proposed child-labor statute that set twelve years as the bottom-most age at which children working in nonagricultural enterprises in Alabama could be employed. The bill made exceptions for newspaper carriers and allowed the children of widowed mothers or disabled fathers to work in textile mills at the age of ten. This bill also outlawed children under sixteen years old from working between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. and for more than eleven hours per day or sixty hours per week, and mandated that after 1 March 1902 all employed children between twelve and sixteen years old must be able to read and have a schooling certificate filed with their employer confirming the completion of twelve consecutive weeks of school during the year. Enforcement provisions of the bill included requiring parents to provide an employer with sworn affidavits of a child's age and a governor-appointed factory inspector with an annual salary of $1500. Violations of the proposed law would result in fines from five to one hundred dollars or three months in prison for parents, and fines of not more than five hundred dollars for employers.[28]

At a 5 February 1901 joint hearing by Alabama House and Senate members, Irene Ashby and Edgar Gardner Murphy argued for the passage of the bill, facing off against numerous lobbyists representing various textile mill companies, including Reuben Mitchell. Mitchell discussed at length the condition of the Dwight mill operatives before they came to Alabama City, the positive influence that the Dwight Company's mill village had on the workers, "the beauties of the village, the library and the church built by the company," and the fact that child-labor regulation would be a bane to the lives of the families who worked in Dwight's Alabama City mill since "the whole family had to work in order to get a decent living." He also reminded the legislators that the repeal of the state's 1887 hours and child-labor law was a determining factor in the Dwight Company's decision to build its branch plant in Alabama City. He said the reversal of the law was done in "fairness to capital," and "from which he trusted they would not go back." Implicit threats that the Dwight Manufacturing Company and other northern-owned mills could easily relocate to states without child-labor

legislation played a key role in blocking the efforts of Alabama's anti-child-labor forces in 1901.[29]

In the wake of the 1901 failure of the child labor and education bill, the southern industry press praised the Alabama legislature for thwarting the attempts of the individuals they saw as New England emissaries and "philanthropists for labor" to force "Southern labor to sacrifice itself in buttressing their decaying fortunes" through regulatory legislation. In the wake of the 1901 failure, Edgar Gardner Murphy and his newly formed Alabama Child Labor Committee sought to assume leadership of the state's anti-child-labor campaign.[30] Murphy and the committee remained friendly to organized labor and respectful of its years-long campaign for child-labor regulation. Yet Murphy and his middle-class supporters knew that the passage of any meaningful legislation in Alabama depended on cultivating widespread, proreform public opinion outside the ranks of organized labor that would be able to effectively pressure legislators into action and check the power that manufacturers exerted at the statehouse. Before the state legislature reconvened for the 1903 session, the members of the Alabama Child Labor Committee worked to secure this base of support. As they did so, they made the Dwight Manufacturing Company a target of their campaign.

The New England industry press would later call the Massachusetts manufacturers' use of child labor in their southern mills "a red herring," and they chastised southerners for "declaring [the manufacturers], not the States themselves, guilty for laws permitting labor conditions that compare unfavorably with those of . . . Massachusetts." Still the Dwight Manufacturing Company was truly embroiled in Alabama's decades-long child-labor controversy from the start.[31] When healthy business conditions returned after the 1893 depression, the majority of New England manufacturers, while continuing to discuss the need to address the disparity of conditions between North and South, had done little to facilitate the equalization of regional wage, age, or hour standards. Those that did take action continued to lobby their state legislatures for the repeal of existing labor legislation or worked to secure the passage of federal regulations. During the 1893 depression, however, the Dwight Company had chosen capital mobility as its strategy to deal with southern competition. In the years that followed, it focused its efforts, therefore, on maintaining the advantages that manufacturing cotton goods in the South offered.

Dwight officials stated explicitly, numerous times, that the reason it constructed its Alabama City mill was so that the company could continue to profitably produce and market its cotton goods in the face of regulatory legislation, secured by Massachusetts labor unions, that imposed restrictions on operations at its Chicopee mill and placed the company at a competitive disadvan-

tage in comparison with southern textile manufacturers. The Dwight Company wanted to build its southern branch factory in a state free from industrial regulations, and company representatives were central figures in the repeal of Alabama's 1887 hours and child-labor law. With Reuben Mitchell acting on their behalf through the turn of the century, Dwight's company leaders continued the campaign against regulatory legislation in Alabama to help ensure that the corporate strategy of operating a southern branch to bolster the profitability of Dwight's parent mill in Chicopee, Massachusetts, would be successful. As the interest in the issue of child-labor regulation in southern textiles increased through the turn of the century, Alabama City agent Reuben Mitchell thought it "best not to give notice to the fact that we are working . . . small help" so that the company could avoid criticism from anti-child-labor advocates.[32] Yet he aggressively lobbied and openly gave testimony before state legislative committees and was integral in the defeats of child-labor measures during Alabama's 1898–99 and 1900–1901 state legislative sessions.

Capital mobility and its relationship to the Dwight Manufacturing Company's employment of children in its Alabama City mill became an important element in the campaign for child-labor regulation in Alabama. Child-labor reformers targeted the Dwight Company's involvement in perpetuating Alabama's laissez-faire status quo as an example of how the success of the state's textile industry, so strongly linked to the ability to draw mobile capital there, rested on a foundation that was inherently exploitative. They criticized Dwight's employment of child labor as a key component of the company's strategy of tapping into the South's manufacturing advantages to keep its Massachusetts mill viable. In doing so, these anti-child-labor activists called into question Alabama's overall strategy of industrial development through attracting investments from manufacturing interests that were seeking to escape stringent labor regulations elsewhere. They hoped to make their case by cultivating a public opinion whereby it would be considered irresponsible and unacceptable for the owners of New England textile companies and the state's political leadership to build Alabama's industrial base, in the words of Irene Ashby, "on the ruin of little children."[33]

Alabama's child-labor reformers knew that they had to be careful in choosing who they attacked. Many Alabamians, poor and wealthy alike, embraced owners of textile mills as public benefactors and saw the textile industry as a positive good that provided jobs and advanced economic well-being from the level of individual families to the state as a whole. Indeed, for the overwhelming majority of textile operatives, the labor of their children was essential for familial economic stability and, therefore, they viewed favorably mill owners who gave work to all family members. To generate widespread support for regula-

tory legislation of the industry, it was necessary for the reformers to focus on those companies perceived as the most flagrant abusers of the state's unfettered industrial system. For Alabama's child-labor forces, the Dwight Manufacturing Company's operations in Alabama City, by virtue of being a Massachusetts-owned business that had located in the South expressly to avoid the regulatory laws in New England, was a perfect target.[34]

Edgar Gardner Murphy openly blamed the Dwight Manufacturing Company and the lobbying efforts of Alabama City agent Reuben Mitchell for the failures of the Alabama state legislature to pass a child-labor law. In an open letter to "the people and press of New England," Murphy singled out the Dwight Manufacturing Company's corporate strategy of deliberately building and operating a mill in the South to circumvent Massachusetts labor regulations and thereby overcome southern competition. Murphy shrewdly played upon sectional sentiments, calling into question the "reputation of Massachusetts and New England as a center of enlightenment and of humanity in industrial legislations" by rebuking the Dwight Manufacturing Company in Alabama City for "doing here what it dare not do at home."[35]

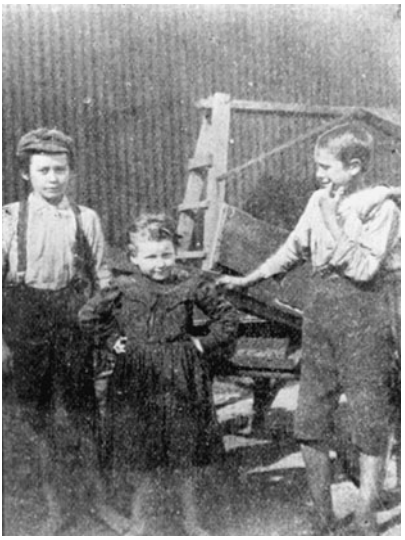
In the public debate that ensued in the Massachusetts press between Murphy and Dwight treasurer J. Howard Nichols, Nichols attempted to diffuse the potential weight of the reformers' capital mobility focus. "There is nothing within the mill or out," Nichols contended, "of which any citizen of Massachusetts need be ashamed." Nichols argued that the Dwight Company did not build a branch factory in the South as a means of capitalizing on the unregulated state of the textile industry there but as a way to help raise the standards of living for the downtrodden mountain farmers who had "hitherto been deprived of needed comforts and largely of elementary advantages." Nichols asserted that "[f]rom the inception of this enterprise, the purpose has been to build up a model town that should be an object lesson to the South, and we are assured that its influences have been helpful."[36]

J. Howard Nichols tried to redirect the dialogue by characterizing the Dwight Company's opposition to child-labor legislation in Alabama as nothing more than an attempt to protect the state from labor unions and restrictions destined to undermine Alabama's competitiveness with other southern textile states. The Dwight Manufacturing Company, Nichols emphasized, was in a unique position to know, first hand, the damage that unions and union-initiated legislation could do to companies competing with unregulated mills. However, Nichols was careful to point out, the Dwight Company was not the initiator of the campaign against the 1901 child-labor bill but only a supporter of the opposition started by native Alabamians. "As they recognized that this bill was only the entering wedge," Nichols wrote, "they determined that action must come from

within the State, and not outside. . . . The manufacturers selected among others our agent, a native Alabamian, to appear before the legislative committee, with the result that the bill was defeated." Nichols attempted to disarm Edgar Gardner Murphy's argument that New Englanders and their mobile capital were to blame for the child-labor situation in Alabama by stigmatizing the child-labor reform movement as caused by union "agitators" and "outside interference."[37] In Nichols's portrayal of the situation, the owners and managers of the Dwight Manufacturing Company were not the profit-hungry, child-exploiting, carpet-bagging industrialists that Edgar Gardner Murphy described, but entrepreneurial philanthropists and regional benefactors who just happened to be from Massachusetts.

Edgar Gardner Murphy vehemently denied that the child-labor reformers were insidious outside forces seeking the ruin of Alabama's textile industry. He had the final word in the months-long debate with Nichols and Horace Sears, treasurer of the Massachusetts-owned West Point Manufacturing Company in Langdale, Alabama, who entered the fray in support of Nichols. "Our elementary contention is," Murphy concluded, "simply that the common conscience will hold, and should hold, the capital of Massachusetts to the moral and economic standards of Massachusetts." The Murphy-Nichols-Sears debate and the publication of numerous Alabama Child Labor Committee pamphlets thereafter, catapulted the issue of child-labor reform into the public discourse in Alabama in a way that previous reform agitation had not.[38]

The debate and pamphlets generated widespread interest in child-labor reform and made the public familiar with the arguments that reformers and manufacturers would use during the child-labor agitation at the statehouse throughout the 1903 legislative session. Murphy and child-labor activists in Alabama continued to stress that they, not outside forces with the intention of harming the state's textile industry, were responsible for the anti-child-labor reform agitation, and that they did so to safeguard the future of Alabama and to protect the white children who labored in its textile mills while black children attended school and worked in agriculture where the outdoor climate was more healthful than that found in the factories. "The attention of the public was turned by lectures and press notices to the fact that this was not merely a state or even a southern question," a recently married Irene Ashby-MacFadyen noted. "[T]he obstruction offered by these northern capitalists to the protection of children in the South was a national scandal." Richard Edmonds responded by lambasting the Alabama public and press for "being played for suckers" and for supporting the movement for legislation instigated by northerners and labor agitators that would "cripple the textile industry in the South, [so] that a small factor of that industry in New England might profit temporarily."[39]



"Three boys, aged respectively 9, 8, and 7 years" (left) and "A little girl 6 years old" (right), from *Pictures From Life: Mill Children in Alabama*, a pamphlet produced by Alabama child-labor reformers at the turn of the century. (Courtesy Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama)

While Edgar Gardner Murphy and middle-class reformers throughout Alabama carried on their campaign to cultivate public support for child-labor restriction, unionists continued their efforts to secure passage of effective regulatory legislation as well. Edgar Gardner Murphy, however, tried to restrain the American Federation of Labor from taking as active a role in the fight as it had during the 1900–1901 legislative session. Knowing that the passage of any child-labor law in Alabama depended on convincing the public that it was not being done at the behest of organized labor, Murphy urged Samuel Gompers and local union leaders to take a secondary, supporting role in the 1903 agitation. Under the auspices of the Alabama State Federation of Labor that was established in 1901, AFL unionists continued to actively participate in the reform movement. "Organized labor will take a hand in pressing the fight," the editor of the *Labor Advocate* told the paper's readers. "The State branch will act in conjunction with the National body in pushing the fight in Alabama and also with the Central Committee of citizens of which Rev. Edgar Gardner Murphy of Montgomery, is chairman."[40]

Paralleling the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, a primary objective of the Alabama organization was to secure the passage of legislation that would be beneficial to the workers of the state. It sought to do so through lobbying and

endorsing labor-friendly candidates for the state legislature. The membership of the Alabama State Federation of Labor came mostly from the ranks of the skilled trades and from the United Mine Workers. Even without a large presence of workers from textile manufacturing, the Alabama State Federation of Labor lobbied aggressively for the passage of bills that would raise the labor standards in the industry, including the one introduced during the 1903 state legislative session.[41]

On 24 January 1903, members of the Alabama legislature began debating a bill designed to regulate the employment of children under twelve years old in the state's factories and manufacturing industries, and to create a system of factory inspection to monitor compliance with the law. This proposed child-labor bill faced strong opposition from textile manufacturers throughout the state who sent representatives to lobby against its passage. The bill received a significant amount of attention in the press statewide. Favorable public opinion, cultivated in large part by the efforts of the Alabama Child Labor Committee, made outright defeat of the bill by the state's textile lobby much more difficult than had been the case two years before. The manufacturers' position, however, continued to hold sway with many politicians at the statehouse. The industry lobby countered Edgar Gardner Murphy's humanitarian argument that child labor degraded the health and welfare of mill children and the Alabama State Federation of Labor's economic interpretation that the use of cheap child labor forced a lowering of wages for all. They asserted instead that the state's textile industry would be crippled by the passage of such legislation, that the law would dissuade future investments in the state's industry, and that the law would only open the floodgates to unions and more regulations.[42]

Facing the possibility of another defeat with the legislature not scheduled to reconvene until 1907, Edgar Gardner Murphy facilitated the introduction of a compromise bill. Murphy's proposal received mixed reactions from reformers, unionists, and manufacturers alike. Child-labor reformers throughout the country applauded the move, calling the compromise that could secure the passage of a child-labor law "most satisfactory."[43] The Alabama State Federation of Labor argued that the compromise might "better conditions materially" and help manufacturing workers throughout the state, but asserted that it was "not the bill that should be passed." The Alabama State Federation of Labor conceded, however, that "the struggle to gain this much has been hard enough, in fact the task has been almost Herculean" and that its passage would be better than nothing. The southern industry press railed against the proposed statute. No matter how restrained the regulations or how lax the enforcement might prove to be, "There is no reason . . . why opposition to the law should be relaxed one whit," Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record* claimed. "In

the case of Alabama" he explained, "it is particularly important that no mistake be made at this time, for . . . if the mistake be made of committing Alabama to socialism, though ever so mild, the State will suffer from the mistake for four years."[44]

The compromise bill, nonetheless, became law in Alabama on 25 February 1903. The new child-labor statue outlawed the employment of children under the age of twelve years in manufacturing establishments and factories, but it included exemptions for orphans and children of widowed mothers or "aged or disabled" fathers; these children could be employed at the age of ten. The law also limited the workweek for children under twelve years old to sixty-six hours, banned anyone younger than thirteen years old from working in factories and manufacturing establishments between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m., and limited the work of anyone between the ages of thirteen and sixteen years during these nighttime hours to forty-eight per week. The law required that employers of minors keep on file affidavits signed by parents or guardians certifying ages and dates of birth. Parents and guardians supplying false age certificates were subject to fines of five to one hundred dollars or three months in jail, while employers "willfully or knowingly" violating the law would be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined up to two hundred dollars. Still, the statute was virtually unenforceable because of the "willfully or knowingly" clause in the penalty provisions and because of the fact that the law did not provide for establishing or maintaining a department to enforce compliance with the act's measures.[45]

After the passage of Alabama's 1903 child-labor law, unions and reformers in the state and nationwide continued to push for more strict and better enforced child-labor regulations. With the disparity of regional conditions in mind, the AFL, state child-labor committees and reform groups, and the National Child Labor Committee, formed in 1904, sought uniform standards of child-labor regulation for every state in the nation. These reformers based their model plan on Massachusetts legislation that, by 1902, established a fourteen year age limit for manufactory workers, banned night work, limited the workweek to fifty-eight hours for women and children, set compulsory education and literacy standards, and provided for a state-financed factory inspection force.[46]

Massachusetts statutes, however, were extremely advanced when compared with labor and education regulations found in the South. In 1902, no southern textile state had a child-labor law. As late as 1905, Georgia had no child-labor regulations. South Carolina had a twelve-year age limit for textile workers, no age limits for children of widowed or dependent parents, and banned work from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. for any child under twelve years old but had no enforcement provisions beyond sworn statements by parents or guardians attesting to a child's age and four months of school attendance. In North Carolina,

state regulations outlawed the employment of children under twelve years old in textile manufactories and set a sixty-six-hour week for all workers under the age of eighteen years. As was the case in Alabama and South Carolina, the North Carolina law did not include any mechanisms to ensure compliance with the regulations. "So far no textile state in the South has been able to secure legal provision . . . to inspect factories and enforce the law," Neal Anderson of Montgomery observed in 1905, "and until this is secured all legislation on the subject must be practically inoperative."[47]

With the approach of Alabama state elections in 1906 and the scheduled start of the new legislative session in January 1907, Alabama anti-child-labor advocates turned their attention to securing effective inspection, age, and education regulations closer to those found in Massachusetts. The issue of New England textile manufacturers using child labor in their southern mills continued to dominate much of the child-labor discourse. The Massachusetts State Federation of Labor blamed the dearth of effective labor laws in the South on "attorneys of the Northern capitalists who have large investments in the Southern mills." Child-labor reformer Andrew McKelway contended that the most "conspicuous opponents" of improved child-labor legislation in Alabama were New England companies with branch factories in the South that earned "dividends twice or thrice as great from their Southern mills." The Dwight Manufacturing Company remained a target for child-labor reformers during these years, despite the fact that at the time the 1903 child-labor law was passed, the Gadsden press declared that "the Big Dwight mills at Alabama City were not affected. . . . [N]o child is employed below the age of twelve and in all the discussions about the employment of children the Dwight mills were pointed out as models." Ignoring the fact that he had aggressively lobbied among state politicians in Montgomery to prevent passage of the child-labor law, the *Gadsden Times News* noted that Dwight's Alabama City agent Reuben Mitchell "was given a large share of the credit for the condition."[48] Dwight's Alabama City mill, nonetheless, continued to receive substantial negative press from elsewhere.

In a 1906 exposé, reformer Bessie Van Vorst used the Dwight Manufacturing Company and its continued employment of children as one example of all that was wrong with the 1903 child-labor statute. Van Vorst attempted to advance the child-labor reform agendas of securing better education requirements, more effective enforcement of laws, and public support for Alabama's child-labor reformers. She described how children under the legal working age of twelve years old not only worked in the Dwight mill but had quit going to school in order to do so. "The system of 'liberty' in the matter of education precludes all question of regularity in school attendance. . . . [O]ut of sixty-five children between the ages of seven and eleven, ten had to 'quit' to go into the mills," Van Vorst found.

Three children in Dwight City, Alabama City, Alabama, ca. 1905. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

"No child attends school more than three winters," she continued, "and many of them come in for a month or two at a time just to 'rest up' from work."[49]

She expounded upon discussions she had with children who worked in the Dwight Alabama City mill to show her readers how easily textile manufacturers could circumvent the 1903 child-labor law. An eleven-year-old girl who worked in the mill described working twelve-hour days in the spinning room with "piles" of other children who were ten and eleven years old. "They used to go in when they wuz five," Van Vorst recorded the girl as stating. "Now they say they're tweaulve [sic], but they ain't." Talking to a fourteen-year-old girl who had been working as a spinner since age eleven, Van Vorst learned about "hiding" underage help from Dwight's owners when they came to the mill, presumably so that the mill owners could stay true to not "willfully or knowingly" employing underage workers. "[W]e'd run out those tiniest ones," the girl told Van Vorst. "Yes, hide 'em in the closets or anywhere" so that no one would "stop 'em workin'."[50]

Van Vorst went on to describe how the Dwight Manufacturing Company made the Alabama City mill village "as attractive as possible." Basing her opinion on what she uncovered in Dwight City, she chastised those who praised southern textile manufacturers for the construction and upkeep of mill villages, and those who assumed that this meant that the company ran "on philanthropic principles." Van Vorst asserted that this was far from the truth. The Dwight Company did not provide their operatives with company-owned houses, a

school, library, and recreational activities, she said, because the owners had a vested interest in the welfare of the millhands. Rather, they did so because an attractive mill village was one of the best ways to acquire and maintain a stable workforce and, thus, it made good business sense. "[T]he difficulty of procuring operatives and of keeping them is so great that it is an investment to make the surroundings as alluring as possible," Van Vorst chided, "and it is cheaper . . . than it is to raise the wages of two thousand laborers" who earned in southern textile mills " 'just too much to die and not enough to live'." Van Vorst contended that cotton textile manufacturers shrewdly used mill towns like Dwight City as profit-making tools by draping them in false mantles of munificence and goodwill. Therefore, Van Vorst concluded, the villages should not be an acceptable excuse for ongoing refusals to enact adequate and enforceable child-labor laws. Continuing to see textile mill owners as socially conscious, Van Vorst asserted, was proof that Alabama's citizens were willing to "have a generation of girls and boys among the poor, the future mothers and fathers, sacrificed, crippled, deteriorated, starved slowly to death, in order that the cotton-mill industry in a single state shall prosper."[51]

Remaining a faithful supporter of the Dwight Manufacturing Company and its southern operations, the Gadsden press attempted to discredit the Van Vorst exposé of Alabama City, calling the information "grossly overdrawn" and "full of misrepresentation gathered in a hurried trip." Exaggeration and hyperbole certainly played a part in reformers' depictions of child-labor abuses in southern cotton textile mills. Still, their portrayals of children workers, the lack of educational opportunities, illiteracy, and low standards of health and safety to be found in textile mills rested on what historian I. A. Newby called "elements of truth."[52] The facts remained that Alabama's child-labor provisions were wantonly and regularly disregarded by factory owners and managers, and that parents often were complicit, invoking parental rights as a defense against state regulations, and did not complain because economic necessity dictated that their children, sometimes in violation of state laws, had to work in order for a family to financially survive.[53]

Child-labor regulation remained a hot-button political issue in Alabama and was particularly important in the state's 1906 gubernatorial race. The front-running candidate, Braxton Bragg Comer, had been the operator of the Avondale Mills, a cotton manufacturing company located near Birmingham. Comer portrayed himself as a reformer, calling for better funding for roads, uniform standards for the regulation of local liquor laws, railroad reforms, and further limitations on child labor. His opponent, Russell Cunningham, with backing from the Alabama State Federation of Labor and the Alabama Child Labor Committee, challenged Comer's reformer image. Comer, as Cunningham and

the anti-child-labor forces pointed out, employed children in his textile mill, had contributed funds to the Alabama textile manufacturers' lobbying efforts against proposed child-labor legislation, was an outspoken opponent of the child-labor bill introduced during the 1903 legislative session, and was a key player in negotiating the virtually unenforceable provisions of the compromise act passed that year. Comer was, in the words of Edgar Gardner Murphy, "the most bitter opponent of child labor legislation I have ever known." The Alabama State Federation of Labor urged its members to carefully scrutinize the candidates' positions on labor-related issues before voting, noting that Alabama's ineffective child-labor regulation "is one of the problems that MUST be solved by the people at the polls."[54]

Braxton Bragg Comer, nevertheless, won Alabama's 1906 governor's race. He garnered over 61 percent of the total vote, with strong support from both the predominately rural Black Belt and the state's urban centers for his campaign pledge to initiate railroad reforms.[55] When the legislature reconvened in January 1907, representatives introduced several bills that pertained to child labor, reduced working hours in the state's mills, and compulsory education. The Alabama Child Labor Committee, the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Alabama State Federation of Labor endorsed a child-labor bill that set the minimum age for employment at fourteen years but allowed exemptions for children to begin working at the age of twelve if they supported a widowed mother or dependant father. The bill also set the maximum work week at fifty-four hours, outlawed night work for children under sixteen years old, and mandated that affidavits of age must be filed by parents or guardians for all mill and factory employees under eighteen years old. In an attempt to ensure that mill children would attend school, the proposed bill required that all children ages twelve to sixteen years attend school twelve weeks a year and that county superintendents supply attendance affidavits to places of employment. Most importantly, the 1907 bill included an enforcement clause that provided a governor-appointed child-labor inspector who would be required to examine manufacturing establishments throughout the state at least four times a year. No action occurred, however, on this more stringent child-labor and education bill during the winter meeting of the 1907 legislature.[56]

Between the winter and summer sessions of the 1907 Alabama state legislature, child-labor reformers worked to gain backing for the proposed act from among the public and Alabama's senators and House representatives. Edgar Gardner Murphy again took the lead in the publicity campaign, writing an open letter to state legislators in which he attacked the loose regulations of the 1903 compromise law and the arguments made by textile manufacturers that passing further child-labor regulations would only injure the prosperity of the

state's cotton manufacturing industry and Alabama's economy overall. According to Murphy and his supporters, attracting investments and underselling New England manufacturers in the marketplace were not more important than the health and welfare of the state's child textile operatives. "Is it an *advantage* to Alabama to have the lowest age-limit in the United States? Is that the kind of advertising that will help us?" he asked, in an implicit indictment of the process of drawing mobile capital to Alabama. "[A]ffixing the stigmas of low standards upon our industrial activity," Murphy continued, "is depreciating the moral credit of the prosperity which we have struggled so long and so proudly to achieve."[57]

When the Alabama legislature met again in July, debates began over the bill in both the House and Senate. Textile manufacturers throughout the state, as anti-child-labor advocates expected, lobbied in Montgomery against the passage of the bill. Reporting that the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City agent Reuben Mitchell was "in Montgomery ostensibly for the purpose of getting a line on the child labor bill," the *Gadsden Daily Times-News* added that "all of the managers of the big cotton mills in the state" were also "on hand." Manufacturers' resistance remained strong but after compromises and an amendment proposed by Governor Comer postponing enactment of the law until 1 January 1908, Alabama had a new child-labor law that included both education and enforcement provisions.[58]

The new regulatory statute, passed 9 August 1907, outlawed the employment of all children under the age of twelve in mills, factories, and manufacturing establishments and did away with all exemptions for children of widowed or dependent parents; it required all children ages twelve to sixteen years to attend school for eight weeks per year; it set the maximum workweek for all employees under fourteen years old at sixty hours; it made illegal employing anyone under sixteen years between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.; it limited to eight the hours that employees ages sixteen to eighteen years could work between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.; and it required all workers under eighteen years old to have an affidavit of age before beginning work. Employer violations of the law would result in fines of fifty to one hundred dollars for first-time offenders and fines of one hundred to five hundred dollars for subsequent infractions. The statute made swearing out false age affidavits an act of perjury. The 1907 law provided for inspection of "factories and manufacturing establishments wherein women and children work" by the inspector of jails and almshouses, obliging the inspector to conduct investigations "at least four times a year *if practical*," and making the inspector responsible for the initiation of prosecutions against mill owners, managers, and superintendents as deemed appropriate.[59]

After the passage of the 1907 child-labor law, additional child-labor reform

in Alabama was effectively sidelined for another four years. Popular interest in Alabama for more stringent regulations and enforcement waned, and in spite of the efforts of child-labor reformers and organized labor, public attention throughout the state shifted to other issues, including funding for better roads, railroad regulation, and prohibition. The Alabama State Federation of Labor decried the law that passed as "a huge joke" and lamented the fact that the organization "did not recognize the bill" in what the Federation contended was a weak and watered-down final version.[60] But the reality was that unionization in the Alabama cotton textile industry remained negligible and, as the Alabama State Federation of Labor stressed, there was no organization functioning effectively within the industry to force compliance with existing laws or capable of cultivating the necessary support for the enactment of better regulatory provisions. Except for a brief special session convened by Governor Comer in 1909 during which the legislature added three minor amendments to the 1907 child-labor law, the Alabama state legislature did not meet again until 1911. The amendments, applicable "only to manufacturing establishments engaged in manufacturing or working in cotton, wool, clothing, tobacco, printing and binding, glass, or other kind of work that is injurious to health when carried on in doors," required a copy of the child-labor law to be posted in every such manufacturing establishment. The amendments also included changes to the age affidavits for minors requiring the date and place of birth and requiring the affidavits to be filed with the employer and factory inspector. When the Alabama state legislature reconvened in 1911, state representatives took no additional action to strengthen the existing child-labor and education regulations.[61]

Despite the inspection and education provisions of the 1907 Alabama child-labor law, textile mill managers' continued resistance coupled with slipshod enforcement of the act yielded only small gains to reformers and unionists seeking to remove children from factories and place them in schools. In 1910, Alabama manufactories still employed 2,003 children ages ten to thirteen; in comparison, Massachusetts had only 279 manufacturing employees ages ten to thirteen years. As late as 1912, Alabama factory inspector W. H. Oates found over 1,900 children employed illegally in the fifty-four textile mills he visited in the state during that year. Although the *Gadsden Daily Times-News* reported that deputy factory inspector P. P. Hudson called the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mills "the best regulated and arranged in the south," in the 1912 annual report of the factory inspector, Oates noted that some of the most serious child-labor violations found by his office occurred in Etowah County where the Dwight Manufacturing Company was located.[62]

Mrs. W. L. Murdoch, Chairperson of the Alabama Child Labor Commit-

tee in 1913, likewise noted that without an adequate system of birth registrations, age affidavits were nearly impossible to disprove, and that parents, mill owners, and the state inspection team showed "great laxity" toward the eight weeks educational requirement for employed youths under the age of sixteen. "[W]here the mill owns the school," she noted, "the report of the factory inspector shows that little attention has been paid to this requirement of the law." In fact, Caleb S. Wilkinson, agent of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill in 1914, regarded the state's child-labor laws as little more than an annoyance. "The greatest restriction they have," Wilkinson wrote to Dwight's Chicopee agent Louis A. Auman, "is that they compel the mills to dispense with the services of the children for eight weeks of the year in which they must go to school."[63]

Effective child-labor regulation resurfaced in Alabama as a topic of interest during the 1915 legislative session. Again, middle-class reformers and Alabama unionists worked in concert to lobby at the statehouse to secure the passage of a more comprehensive and detailed child-labor statute. These reformers wanted legislation that would lower the working hours of minors to between forty-eight and fifty-five per week, but manufacturers' resistance led to another compromise statute. The 1915 Alabama child-labor law raised the legal age for children in "all gainful employments" except domestic service and agriculture to fourteen years old; set the maximum work day for minors under sixteen employed in manufactories at eleven hours a day and limited the total work week of this group to six days and sixty hours; outlawed work between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. for manufactory employees under sixteen; and established numerous regulations relating to securing and filing working papers and proof of fulfilling the eight-week educational requirement. In the same session, Alabama legislators passed a compulsory school attendance law requiring children ages eight to fifteen years to attend school at least sixty days a year, regardless of whether or not the child worked in a manufacturing job.[64]

Enforcement of the child-labor and schooling provisions, however, was sketchy at best. It remained the responsibility of the state factory inspector and a small team of deputies to scrutinize all the workplaces located in Alabama and to initiate prosecutions of child-labor regulation violators, as well as to enforce the requirements of the compulsory education law. This situation continued even after the creation of the Alabama Child Welfare Department by an act of the state legislature in 1919.[65]

Many of Alabama's child-labor reformers were only marginally satisfied with the provisions of the 1903, 1907, and 1915 child-labor laws and were conscious of the remaining disparity in conditions from state to state. Although cognizant of the need for an equalization of child-labor standards nationwide, they did

Alabama City school students and their teachers, ca. 1915. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

not necessarily support ongoing efforts of the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) to secure the passage of federal child-labor legislation. While ardent in their support of the cause to halt the employment of children, they believed that it was the states, not the federal government, that had the authority to regulate child labor.[66]

In 1906, Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana introduced into Congress the first national child-labor bill, basing it on the federal government's constitutional power to regulate interstate commerce. This proposed statute sought to outlaw child labor by making illegal the interstate transportation and sale of mined or manufactured goods by companies that employed children under fourteen years old. The NCLC endorsed this bill in 1907 and numerous New England textile manufacturers and members of Congress supported it. Some southern members of the NCLC, including Alabama's Edgar Gardner Murphy, however, left the organization in protest of the endorsement, preferring instead to continue pushing for child-labor reforms at the state level. Southern manufacturers, too, were wholly opposed to this bill, seeing it as another attempt made by northern textile mill owners and reformers to undercut the South's competitive advantages. The bill failed to become law, but it did facilitate national interest in child labor, which led to an extensive federal study of the issue, completed in 1913, and to the creation of the U.S. Children's Bureau in 1912. It was not until 1 September 1916, in the face of staunch opposition from southern mill owners and members of Congress, that the Keating-Owen child-labor bill, based on the earlier Beveridge proposal, became law. The U.S. Supreme Court declared the Keating-Owen Act unconstitutional on 3 June 1918. The following year, Congress approved the Child-Labor Tax Amendment to a 1919 revenue bill that levied a 10 percent excise tax on goods made by children, but the Supreme Court declared this tax unconstitutional in 1922. Efforts by child-labor reformers to add to the U.S. Constitution an amendment giving Congress the right to regulate child labor failed as well.[67]

In spite of the lack of success in securing child-labor regulations at the federal level, tangible change did occur within the southern cotton textile industry. "History is now busy repeating herself in the great Southland. . . . She will be compelled to readjust her hours of labor and open her doors to the trade union," observed Charles Pidgin, chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, in 1905. "History delights in repeating herself, and the South will not prove an exception to the rule." Indeed, by the end of World War I, numerous fledgling textile unions existed, the employment of children in the cotton textile industry was on the wane, and educational standards and literacy rates of minors were on the rise throughout the Piedmont South. Gradual compliance with state and short-lived federal child-labor regulations, technological advances in

the production of textiles, and a shift toward the manufacture of finer goods in Piedmont mills during the first two decades of the twentieth century helped reduce the number of children working in the southern textile industry.[68]

A wide gap, however, remained between New England and the Piedmont South in the numbers of unionized workers, wages paid, and hours worked by those employed in the cotton textile industry, regardless of age. The retreat to the North-first strategy of organizing in the wake of the failed 1902 Augusta strike proved to be a fatal error for New England textile unionists in their attempts to achieve an equalization of regional hours, age, and wage standards through organization and union pressure exerted at the workplace and in statehouses. A long-term depression lasting nearly twenty years began in the textile industry during the 1920s and only aggravated the disparity of regional conditions. The industry-wide economic downturn and the labor unrest that it sparked made many New England manufacturers revisit the strategy, embraced decades earlier by corporations like the Dwight Manufacturing Company, of tapping into the lower production costs found in the southern textile states by building branch factories there. The Dwight Company, however, having already taken this first step in the process of capital mobility, took the next one by closing its Chicopee mill entirely.

CHAPTER FIVE

"A General Demoralization of Business"

The Textile Depression of the 1920s

In January 1916, the managers and overseers of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City textile mill gathered with prominent townspeople for a six-course banquet to celebrate the company's recent record output of manufactured cotton goods. "The record made by the mill has been most remarkable during the past six months. . . . The parent mills at Chicopee, Mass., are running on full time and the Alabama City mills are fully as prosperous," boasted Alabama City's mayor, W. T. McCord. "[I]t is said," noted the local press, "to have been one of the most enjoyable affairs . . . ever held here."[1] During the years of World War I, the textile industry saw production and profits soar as wartime orders kept mills running virtually nonstop. Cotton-mill operatives, likewise, saw their earnings rise, joined labor unions in record numbers, and looked forward to better times ahead.

With the armistice in 1918, however, government contracts ended, the demand for cotton goods plummeted, and warehouses overflowed with unsellable stock. Throughout the 1920s, textile mill owners waited year after year for increased consumer consumption, better profits, and an industry-wide recovery. Prosperity's decade proved instead to be one of depression for the textile industry. Mill operatives, North and South, saw the gains of the war years slip away with rounds of wage cuts, unsuccessful strikes, and open-shop campaigns used by management to eradicate unions from their cotton mills. As the textile depression deepened, the missteps of New England textile unionists in their past approaches to southern competition caught up with them. Decades of focusing on local interests had undermined a wider solidarity and fundamentally spoiled any possibility of a strong national union that could impose common standards of wages, hours, and working conditions throughout the industry. Indeed, many of these New England unionists saw southern textile workers more as threats to their wages and working conditions than as friends with whom they had a common cause and should form a united front. Through the 1920s, New England operatives often blamed southern workers themselves, not the conditions under which they labored, for the successive rounds of wage cuts

and mill closures that plagued the cotton textile industry in the North. As increasing numbers of textile companies throughout New England looked southward, hoping to save themselves from bankruptcy, the United Textile Workers of America found itself without a membership base or strategy capable of halting the movement of textile capital to the states of the Piedmont South. Nowhere were the implications of the UTWA's virtual powerlessness more evident than at the Dwight Manufacturing Company. Dwight management used the open-shop branch mill it had operated in Alabama City since 1896 to extract concessions from the unions organized at the parent mill in Chicopee, and ultimately, to make the Chicopee mill and its workers expendable as the company struggled to remain profitable in the midst of depression conditions.

Hints of the impending 1920s textile depression were evident in New England nearly a decade before, when cotton textile manufacturers experienced a series of slack years during the 1910s. "Conditions in cotton manufacturing during the past six months have been deplorable," complained Franklin Hobbs, president of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers in 1911. "Mills have been running short time and it is estimated that during the past month production, both north and south, has not been fifty per cent. of normal." As was the case with most coarse-goods producers, the Dwight Manufacturing Company felt the pinch of these slow years. During the summer of 1914, the Dwight mill in Chicopee began operating on a four-day schedule, due, according to the local press, to the "present business depression."[2] Unlike many Massachusetts mills that were unable to make enough earnings to pay dividends to their stockholders, however, the Dwight Company, because of its Alabama City operations, remained profitable. For the eighteen months from December 1913 to May 1915, for example, the Dwight Company made a net profit of over $62,000, even though the Chicopee mill registered a net loss of over $7,000.[3] The lower wages paid to and longer hours worked by the Alabama City mill operatives translated into a lower production cost for Dwight's southern-made goods and profits for the parent company in Massachusetts, even during a downturn in the industry.

By 1916, despite shortages of labor, scarcities of supplies such as textile dyes and processing chemicals, and higher cotton prices due to increased demand and crop destruction by the boll weevil, World War I had breathed new life into the struggling cotton textile industry. To meet the growing need for wartime cotton goods, textile companies throughout the country expanded their productive capacities by building new mill facilities, installing the most modern spinning and weaving machinery, and adding shifts for workers. Within nine months of announcing in 1914 that it would decrease its production to a four-day schedule, the Dwight Manufacturing Company in Chicopee was operating on a full-time basis with the addition of a night shift. Dwight gave notice that its

two thousand Chicopee employees would receive "the benefits of better business conditions and correspondingly large incomes" with departmental wage increases. The company also began a major overhaul of its mill complex that took until 1922 to complete.[4]

Dwight's Alabama City operatives also saw their share of wartime profits in the form of wage increases and in village and mill improvements. In the mill village, for example, the company financed the construction of a company hospital, a new school and post office, dozens of new homes, and a "modern" sanitation system for the residential district. In the mill itself, wartime profits funded the installation of a dust removal system and new machinery, including nearly three hundred automatic looms. Both the Chicopee and Alabama City mills were working on filling government orders for tent cloth by the spring of 1917. Throughout the course of the war, the company shipped more than 1.2 million yards of "grey shelter" cloth for use by U.S. armed forces.[5] Even with wage increases for operatives in Alabama City and Chicopee, and even with the substantial changes made to the Chicopee complex and to the Alabama City mill and village, between December 1916 and May 1920 the Dwight Manufacturing Company recorded the highest profits in its history.[6]

But if World War I created conditions in which textile companies could make record financial gains, it also stimulated union organization throughout the industry. After ignoring southern organizing for a decade, in 1912 the leadership of the UTWA again turned their attention to the possibility of organizing textile workers in the Piedmont South. However, the UTWA's ability to organize, especially among southern millhands, remained limited at best because of chronic shortages of funds, virulent antiunionism throughout the industry, the apathy of New England locals toward southern organizing, and an inability to bridge regional, ethnic, gender, and skill lines. In 1913, the UTWA employed seven full-time and three part-time organizers to undertake the work of unionizing the workforce of the entire U.S. textile industry. Between 1915 and 1919, the number of UTWA organizers in the field was never more than thirteen.[7]

Despite these limitations, the UTWA did see a significant increase in its membership as part of the overall growth of unionized workers in U.S. industries during World War I. Workers' demands for better wages and working conditions, coupled with labor shortages and government policies designed to ensure steady production and labor-capital peace during wartime, translated into growing membership rolls, union recognition by some employers, and the eight-hour day for workers in several major industries. It was the policy of the UTWA and the AFL in general to avoid strikes as much as possible during the war. Samuel Gompers insisted on this "no strike" policy, which assured government and employers that production would not be hampered by AFL-led

work stoppages, as the means through which labor could extract concessions. Many organized workers, however, engaged in unauthorized, wildcat strikes during the war to gain better working conditions, higher wages, shorter working hours, and union recognition. Significant gains, nonetheless, were made among unions, such as those in coal and on the railroads that were under federal control during wartime, and in mass industries like steel, meatpacking, and textiles. Union affiliations in industries nationwide increased by more than 70 percent from 1917 to 1920. By 1920, the UTWA claimed jurisdiction over one hundred thousand textile workers, approximately 10 percent of the entire U.S. textile workforce.[8]

The UTWA did not have the resources to sustain an all-out, nationwide unionization campaign, but it embraced a strategy whereby established unions, primarily those in New England, pushed for employer concessions through strike threats while the union sent organizers to individual unorganized mills where a walkout loomed or had occurred to take charge the conflict, enroll members, and establish new locals. UTWA members in New England, likewise, continued to fight for state-level industrial labor legislation, and under the auspices of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, unionists from the UTWA played a significant role in securing the passage of a forty-eight-hour law in Massachusetts. Between 1917 and 1919 an estimated forty thousand southern textile mill workers joined the UTWA, comprising the majority of the nearly seventy thousand men and women who became UTWA members between 1914 and 1920.[9]

Unlike the AFL, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) did not cooperate with the government or support the war effort. Focusing on the unskilled immigrant operatives that the UTWA largely ignored, the IWW, despite attempts by employers and the government alike to destroy the union, engaged in organization campaigns through the war and immediate postwar years in several textile centers of the Northeast. The 2 January 1919 edition of the *Springfield Republican* reported that the IWW had organized an estimated 250 workers in Springfield during the winter of 1918. The presence of the IWW in the Springfield-Holyoke-Chicopee area led local businesses to propose "a campaign to fight the I.W.W'ism and Bolshevism, which they fear is getting a strong foothold in the neighborhood" through "semi-weekly advertisements to thwart [it]" in the pages of the local newspapers. When asked to participate in the advertising campaign in February 1919, the Dwight Manufacturing Company declined, arguing that a public campaign against the IWW would only serve to give the union more press. Widespread purges of the organization ultimately undermined the IWW's strength nationwide.[10]

By the end of World War I, the Gadsden, Alabama, area had a strong union

presence. Labor unions existed among the city's carmen, machinists, sheet-metal workers, iron workers, blacksmiths, carpenters, moulders, electricians, plumbers, bricklayers, telegraph operators, barbers, motion picture operators, and printers, painters, and paper hangers. The wartime unionization drives of the United Textile Workers of America, however, did not reach the Dwight mill in adjacent Alabama City. The longstanding antiunion climate perpetuated by the Dwight Company's management, steady production schedules, rising wages, mill village and workplace improvements, and the dearth of UTWA organizers in mill towns free of labor conflict, meant that the union did not gain a foothold among Dwight's Alabama City operatives. In the Dwight Company's Chicopee mill, too, labor-management strife was almost nonexistent through the war years. Disagreements occurred over increasing workloads and the entrance of Greek workers into the overwhelmingly French Canadian ranks of the loomfixers, but in spite of the presence of unionized loomfixers, nappers, carders, weavers, and spinners in the mill, supervisors and union members resolved these disputes at the departmental level and no strikes or lockouts took place.[11]

The flush times of the war years that mitigated the potential for labor trouble at the Dwight Manufacturing Company, nevertheless, gave way to a return of sluggish conditions throughout the industry by the autumn of 1920. According to Paul Seabury, during World War I the textile industry was on "a kind of week-end economic debauchery, with its inevitable gloomy Monday when normal peacetime conditions returned." Initially, wartime orders put an end to speculations that arose among manufacturers by 1914 that the cotton textile industry had entered a period of prolonged depression. But with the cessation of government contracts during late 1918, many textile companies watched the price of and demand for cotton goods collapse. Their accounting books revealed proportionately shrinking profit margins. "We have seen the armistice signed and witnessed a general demoralization of business," noted National Association of Cotton Manufacturers president W. Frank Shove. "War contracts were canceled in wholesale fashion and the general result . . . was that the market for textiles dropped from the high points of 1918 to—in some cases—half the value."[12]

The factors underlying the 1920s textile depression were myriad. Tariff restrictions and the developing textile production in countries like India, Egypt, China, and Japan meant a decreased demand for American-made goods in numerous foreign markets and severely limited the ability of American manufacturers to dump surplus goods overseas. Domestically, the new fashion of rising hemlines meant falling demand for fabric, and the introduction of synthetic fabrics such as rayon and nylon cut into cotton textile sales nationwide. Further-

more, the rapid expansion of the industry that had taken place during World War I, as well as technological improvements, spurred overproduction. There were no widespread consolidations in textiles as there were in other major manufacturing industries, and this meant that hundreds of small firms competed for dominance in a contracting marketplace. Throughout the decade, overproduction and glutted markets became more severe as individual mills attempted to capture a larger share of the shrinking market by producing more goods at a lower price than their competitors. Overproduction begat overproduction and mill managers throughout New England and the South constantly looked for ways to cut their manufacturing costs. What followed was a decade of sporadic production, increased workloads for operatives, and rollbacks of the wage increases and bonuses paid to millhands during the labor-scarce war years.[13]

Good times continued at the Dwight Manufacturing Company through the spring and summer of 1920. In May, the Dwight directors announced that stockholders would receive a 100 percent dividend and that the company's capital stock would be increased so that it could, in addition to the ongoing overhaul at the Chicopee facility, add "several departments" to the Alabama City mill. The high profits earned by the Dwight Company during the war years, however, quickly turned into losses. "[T]he situation today is the worst since the decline began," David Clark of the *Southern Textile Bulletin* observed during the summer of 1920, "and it seems that severe curtailment of output is the only remedy." The first sign of the textile depression came to Alabama City in mid-September when Dwight supervisors informed the operatives that the mill would be closed for one week. "The reasons given for the closing," the local newspaper informed its readers, "are that . . . the stock of goods . . . are piling up in the warehouses . . . and a little relief is necessary at this time to relieve the situation." When the Alabama City mill reopened, it operated on a reduced schedule of three days a week.[14] Within six months, the Dwight Manufacturing Company had gone from making a net profit of over $800,000 to recording a net loss of over $1.5 million.[15]

The textile operatives at Alabama City received the welcome news that the company planned to increase production and begin operating four days a week for nine hours a day, effective 10 January 1921. Dwight management also notified its Alabama City employees that a new wage schedule would be in effect whereby all operatives would face a reduction of 25 percent and the total elimination of the 10 percent bonuses paid to full-time employees during the war years. Dwight's Chicopee employees, following a month-long mill closure there, saw their wages lowered by 22.5 percent on 19 January 1921. "The popular cry of the manufacturer is 'wages must come down like everything else,' and this sounds logical at the very first glance," noted UTWA president John Golden about the

wave of postwar wage cuts. "They fail to remember, however, that the cost of the bare necessities of life have come down so little that the workingman up to the present time has barely felt it."[16] Indeed, operatives bore the brunt of the textile depression as mill managers throughout the industry shifted the expense of mill losses to their employees by making wage reductions the cornerstone of their cost-cutting strategies.

During the winter and spring of 1921, the Dwight Manufacturing Company did not reduce wages any further, but the Chicopee and Alabama City mills operated on sporadic schedules. "We have impressed everyone with the importance of getting the greatest production possible in order to keep costs down," Chicopee agent Louis A. Aumann reported to Dwight treasurer Ernest Lovering on the operations there. "We are reducing help to the lowest possible limit, and also shutting down departments whenever we see an opportunity to save a dollar." The Alabama City mill, meanwhile, closed every alternate week with Dwight's Alabama City operatives averaging only 22.5 hours of work per week until the mill began operating on a steady schedule of 5 days and 50 hours every week in June. "This is the first encouraging break in the present industrial depression since the steel plant resumed operations the first day of May," the Gadsden press noted when it did so. "Throughout the district there is a distinct undertone of encouragement." Upon the announcement that the Alabama City mill would begin operating on a six-day, sixty-hour per week schedule in late July, the *Gadsden Daily Times-News* happily noted that the company had received several large orders, praising the Dwight Company's management for keeping "the mills running as much as possible to take care of the employes [*sic*]" during the recent downturn in business.[17] Yet operatives at the company felt differently.

The sting of short-time operations, wage reductions, and chronic mill closures sowed the seeds of discontent among the employees at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill. "[U]p to a few years ago the standard of wages prevailing in the textile industry was notoriously low and once these workers have enjoyed a fairly decent wage," John Golden declared, "they don't propose to go back to the former low standards." Like textile operatives throughout the Piedmont South between 1919 and 1921, the Dwight Alabama City millhands looked to union organization and collective action against their employer as a means through which they could prevent management from undermining the wage increases received and relative economic stability achieved during the war years. In fact, as numerous scholars of the textile South have argued, wartime wage increases gave textile operatives the ability to more fully participate in the burgeoning consumer culture of the early 1920s. These higher wages created expectations for better standards of living among millhands, especially

those in their teens and early twenties who grew up in mill villages, and unlike their parents, had little or no direct connection to the land and saw themselves as permanent wage-earners. In order to protect the gains made during World War I, southern operatives were more willing to challenge management through collective action when mill owners, during the economic downturn experienced in the textile industry by 1920, began to rollback the wage increases and workplace concessions made through the war. Between 1919 and 1921, major strikes took place in Charlotte, Kannapolis, Concord, Huntersville, and Rock Hill, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; and the Horse Creek Valley of South Carolina.[18]

The Dwight workers initially organized, not under the auspices of the United Textile Workers of America or any other established textile union, but with the help of the Gadsden local of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen. Over one thousand Dwight operatives officially organized the Alabama City textile union at a meeting on 9 October 1921. By the next meeting held later that week, the union had applied to become a local within the UTWA and over 1,450 of Dwight's 1,500 workers had joined. "There was a large delegation from the car workers present," the *Gadsden Daily Times-News* informed its readers about the gathering, "and they are standing squarely behind the new textile union. . . . For some time the organizers have been at work on this organization and last night their dreams came true, even better than it was anticipated."[19]

The Alabama City textile union struck the Dwight mill on Monday, 31 October 1921. "Only 18 employees remained in the mill," the local press reported, "and they also came out a few minutes later" in response to the firing of Dwight employee W. J. Mann "because he was talking unionism." It was the first collective protest initiated by the Alabama City operatives since the opening of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's southern branch in 1896. Spokespersons for the Dwight union stated that "their members were standing solid," and vowed to remain on strike until they received "recognition of the union and an increase in wages." Caleb S. Wilkinson, agent of the Alabama City mill, simply stated in return that the company was "marking time" and felt no compunction to bargain with the union as there was "a large reserve stock of finished goods stored in the warehouses" and "a very small demand for cotton goods on the market." By Friday, the strike appeared to be over, settled "in a satisfactory manner to all parties concerned," with Agent Wilkinson agreeing to the union's demands if the workers would end the work stoppage and return to the mill on Monday.[20]

As had been its practice since the 1870s during periods of labor strife at its Chicopee mill, however, the Dwight Manufacturing Company had no intention of negotiating with the Alabama City union. When the Alabama City operatives arrived for work on 7 November, they found the gates locked and the mill silent.

Although three days earlier Agent Wilkinson "gave his word of honor that there would be no discrimination between union and nonunion employes [*sic*]," he notified the union that the mill would reopen only on the condition that members "lay down their [union] cards." Even with the arrival of Henry Etaugh, second vice president of the UTWA, Wilkinson would not negotiate with the local and had the aim, according to the *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, "to fight the union organization here and try to starve them out."[21]

By Wednesday, the local began distributing UTWA strike funds to Dwight workers and public sentiment in the Gadsden area had swayed toward the locked-out operatives because Wilkinson had gone back on his word. Agent Wilkinson, fearing a significant community-wide backlash against the company, announced that Dwight management wanted to avoid a protracted conflict and would resume operations on a fifty-five-hour-per-week schedule. Union members, Wilkinson said, were not required to renounce their UTWA memberships as a condition for reemployment. "[T]he Dwight Company will manage the working of the mill just the same in the future as it has been managed in the past," the company's official statement declared. "All we ask is that employees that go back to work will do their whole duty and be loyal to the company . . . and the mill will treat every one square that will do the right thing." The issues of union recognition and wage increases, Wilkinson added, would be "arranged between the workers and the management as soon as these problems can be taken up."[22]

Upon resumption of mill operations, however, Alabama City employees quickly learned the expectation of being "loyal to the company" meant that management would not tolerate a union presence among its operatives, and management's union busting continued. The company engaged the services of labor agents to hire new employees "and as fast as secured, the old employees [were] laid off and the new help put in." Wilkinson fired all operatives who would not give up their union membership, informed them that they would never be rehired at the Dwight mill, and ordered all discharged workers and their families to vacate company houses within ten days. Wilkinson threatened those who refused to leave their homes with removal by force and prosecution for unlawful detainer. The company also levied fines against workers "for calling a new employee the usual name applied to a nonunion worker who is employed as a strikebreaker." The local press characterized the situation in Alabama City as "open war on the Textile Workers," adding that even employees who "have been with the company for ten and fifteen years and whose work has been satisfactory . . . have been discharged with some frivolous trumped up excuse to get them out of the way."[23]

The firings and evictions continued through December 1921 and into January

1922, but members of the Dwight textile local in Alabama City were "still standing together." In February, the Dwight Manufacturing Company found itself beset by labor troubles in both its Massachusetts and Alabama City mills, with unionized workers in Chicopee threatening to strike. In textile mills throughout New England, the imposition of a round of 20 percent wage cuts precipitated a series of region-wide strikes lasting nearly the entire year and involving roughly 85,000 textile operatives in mills from Maine to Rhode Island. Although New England mill owners justified the 1922 wage reductions by saying that "[w]ages and costs of production in the South . . . were so much lower than in the North that northern mills were facing destruction," UTWA president John Golden countered that southern competition was simply "a device for justifying low wages in New England, in order to continue big profits." The primary issue for the Dwight Manufacturing Company, though, was not simply how to lower costs and wages to match southern conditions, but how to cut the wages paid to its employees in Massachusetts *and* prevent its Chicopee employees from striking as it continued its campaign to eradicate the Alabama City union.[24]

In January 1922, the Dwight Company announced its intention to cut wages at the Chicopee mill by 20 percent. The Dwight loomfixers' union was the first to vocalize its displeasure with the plan. Hoping to avert a strike, Chicopee agent Louis Aumann informed the union that he would be willing to decrease the reduction to 10 percent in exchange for an agreement that they would stay at work. Upon receipt of the news, the loomfixers told Aumann that they "absolutely refuse any cut down at this time" and would strike if an agreement with management about the wage issue could not be reached. Behind the scenes, meanwhile, Aumann "got busy at once with the Overseers, and told them to take up the 10 percent reduction with their operatives to find out their attitude," informing the Dwight corporate officers that he thought "that the matter was taken up at exactly the right time." The mill supervisors found that a majority of the employees, after having "impressed on them the fact [that the] mill had been running solely for their benefit, when it should have been closed," would accept the 10 percent cut and would not support any walkout led by the loomfixers. Facing a no-win situation within the mill, and the possibility that loomfixers who were out of work because of strikes going on elsewhere in the region would fill their positions should they walk out, the Dwight loomfixers capitulated.[25]

With the strike threat in Chicopee safely put to rest, Dwight management returned its full attention to eliminating the union in Alabama City. Within a week of settling with the Chicopee loomfixers, Alabama City agent Caleb Wilkinson announced that the mill would effect a partial shutdown and operate only three days a week, leaving the local press to wonder "just why the

mill officials are taking this course as nearly all of the mills in the east are out on strike." The Alabama City union immediately began deliberations on how to "counteract" the move by the company and UTWA official Henry Etaugh returned to Alabama City with "full authority to order a strike."[26] What the townspeople of the Gadsden area and Dwight's southern operatives themselves failed to realize, however, was that Dwight management was capitalizing on the absence of ongoing communication and cooperation between the union locals in its Massachusetts and Alabama mills to fight and win a two-front war against their organized employees. The company made the concession of only cutting wages in the Chicopee mill by 10 percent instead of by 20 percent to avoid a strike. Through a careful balancing act of concessions in Chicopee and aggression in Alabama City, management ensured that production could continue in Chicopee even as the company took steps to precipitate a crisis in Alabama City to finally rid themselves of the southern union and the potential for higher wages and limits on Dwight's managerial prerogatives that came with it.

Upon his arrival in Alabama City, Henry Etaugh of the UTWA cautioned the Dwight union against an immediate walkout and, citing the troubled condition of the industry, urged them to attempt to "iron out" their differences with the company. But after enduring relentless harassment by management and nearly six weeks of operating on the three-day-per-week schedule, members of the Dwight local had had enough and struck the Alabama City mill without UTWA approval. Agent Wilkinson declared himself "in the dark" as to the reasons for the walkout. Representatives of the Dwight local responded "that a large part of the machinery had been speeded up so as to make additional goods, which would amount to approximately 25 per cent cut in wages," and when coupled with the shortened workweek, it created conditions that "the owners knew they would not stand for."[27]

Like during the 1921 strike and lockout, Caleb Wilkinson refused to bargain with the union, "giving as his reason that he would be giving tacit recognition" by doing so. The striking workers quickly found themselves in a much more precarious situation than when they struck the mill in 1921. During the 1922 strike, only about half of the Alabama City operatives left the mill in support of the union protest. In the months between the two walkouts, many union members had been discharged, while others abandoned the organization and did not join the walkout for fear of losing their jobs and their homes. The UTWA national leadership, moreover, would not authorize the walkout and rejected the Dwight workers' requests for strike funds, leaving the Dwight local to fight the battle on its own. No outpouring of community support occurred either, and the local press publicized the fact that the strike was unauthorized and characterized it as "trouble" initiated by outsiders and "parties with sinister motives." Within

two days of the walkout, although Dwight officials "did not say whether the additional machinery was operated by returning employes [*sic*] or [by] help that had been secured from other sources," the mill had enough operatives to run at 70 percent capacity.[28] Wilkinson simply continued to ignore the strikers and hired nonunion workers to replace them. By May, the union was broken and Wilkinson had achieved his goal of eradicating the UTWA from the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill.

The purge of the textile union throughout the industry between 1919 and 1922 was the purge at Dwight's southern branch writ large. Wage cuts precipitated worker militancy, and management turned the sluggish state of the industry into a union-busting tool by closing their mills and selling surplus stocks of goods, waiting out the union and hiring nonunion labor to fill positions left vacant by striking workers. Mill owners throughout the country chipped away at the wartime gains that had been made throughout the textile industry and by the beginning of 1923, UTWA membership had declined nearly 75 percent and hovered at its prewar level. "The cotton barons are drunk with power," UTWA president Thomas McMahon declared. "[T]hey are wielding the ax on organization wherever it springs up. They destroy the offices of local unions by putting them on the blacklist, and many of our men and women have trudged from state to state without being able to get employment." Lewis Bowen, secretary-treasurer of the Alabama State Federation of Labor, observed that there had never been "such a strong gigantic drive against the Organized Labor Movement" as existed in Alabama by 1921.[29]

The attitude in the greater Gadsden community toward unionized labor soured significantly in the wake of the failed Dwight strike in 1922 and after a successful strike in October 1923 of the Gadsden Brotherhood of Railway Carmen at the Southern Railroad's car works. After driving the union out of its mill in 1922, the Dwight Company completed the conversion of all of its operations from steam to electric power, and it announced that plans were being drafted for an expansion of the Alabama City facility and the addition of three hundred looms.[30] Later the following year, the Southern Railroad granted union recognition to the Gadsden carmen, but shortly after the strike settlement, a fire destroyed the car works and railway officials announced that instead of rebuilding in unionized Gadsden, it would shift its operations to other facilities. The Dwight Manufacturing Company, Gulf States Steel, and the Southern Railroad car works were the three biggest employers in the greater Gadsden area in the early 1920s. The closure of the car works left seven hundred Gadsden residents unemployed. The lesson Gadsden residents took from the actions of the Dwight Manufacturing Company and the Southern Railroad was that in a union-free atmosphere, industries would invest and reinvest, as Dwight did with its mill

expansion and improvements, but that companies, like the car works, would avoid areas where organized labor was strong. "If the removal of the car works will bring a realization of what is needed in the way of a co-operative spirit, then it will be a blessing," declared Gadsden resident O. R. Hood. "[A]s soon as word goes out that there is a wholesome spirit of protective interest for invested capital . . . Gadsden will grow as it has never grown before and there will be no way to stop it."[31]

In 1923, the communities of Gadsden and Alabama City, as well as the state of Alabama, attempted to reinvigorate their campaigns to attract new investments and manufacturing industries that had successfully induced the Dwight Manufacturing Company to build its southern branch factory there during the 1890s. The state established the Department of Commerce and Industries to promote agriculture and industry statewide. It also created the Industrial Development Board as a vehicle through which the state would work to secure investments for the development of new industries. In a local effort to affirm the public image of the Gadsden area as industry friendly, over one hundred of Gadsden's "leading business and professional people" signed an "Open Shop Resolution" in November. "The enemies of organized labor," according to Lewis Bowen of the Alabama State Federation of Labor, seized on the relocation of the Southern Railroad car works after the 1923 fire as an "opportunity and began the slogan of advertising Gadsden as an open shop town." Returning to a key selling point used at the turn of the century, community promoters portrayed Gadsden as a growing industrial city that had an abundance of cheap, unorganized labor waiting to be hired. The 1923 resolution proclaimed that through the open shop "every man and woman in the lawful exercise of his or her natural right to earn a livelihood [would] be protected," but that "the right of outside parties to interfere in matters arising between employee and employer is denied." Representatives of community groups, including the Gadsden and Alabama City Chambers of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, the Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Rotary Club, pledged their support for the open-shop movement and established a committee to secure the signatures of all businesspersons not attending the meeting.[32]

The Gadsden Central Labor Union held a public meeting a week after the resolution passed so that the city's unions could voice their opposition to the open-shop movement. At the meeting, union members argued that organized labor was not a roadblock to Gadsden's progress and development; rather organized labor would help to advance these goals because strong unions were the only assurance to potential investors that mutual cooperation, not antagonism, would be the foundation of labor-management relations. M. J. Williams of the bricklayers' union also emphasized the stability that unions provided by noting

that organizations set standards by which all members had to abide. Various businesses and professions had "their organizations," he asserted, and so should labor. Despite protestations to the contrary from the business community, the open-shop resolution, according to A. C. Colvin of the carpenters' union, meant "the destruction of organized labor" in Gadsden.[33]

The city's unions did not simply acquiesce to the business community's open-shop strategy. Yet although the Alabama State Federation of Labor commended Gadsden's unions for "the determination shown by them in resisting the onslaughts of the open shoppers and the advocates of the American plan of operation," no new organizational drives were successful in the Gadsden area for nearly a decade. The remaining unions in the area, primarily those in the skilled trades, could not thwart the return of the city's prewar, antiunion status quo. According to historian Charles Martin, Gadsden's proindustry stance was a key factor in the 1929 decision of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company to build a branch factory in Gadsden.[34]

"The Solid South," proclaimed Richard Edmonds of the *Manufacturers' Record* in 1924, "means security for every manufacturer trembling under the whiplash of the anarchistic labor leaders." Postwar open-shop campaigns such as the one in Gadsden were ruinous for the fledgling industrial unions formed during World War I. Overall union membership declined 25 percent between 1920 and 1923, and it dropped by nearly half within a decade. The industry depression of the 1920s compounded the troubles for textile unions throughout the country. UTWA treasuries were nearly empty by the end of the 1922 New England strikes, and membership dwindled from a World War I high of 10 percent of all textile workers nationwide to less than 3 percent by 1929.[35]

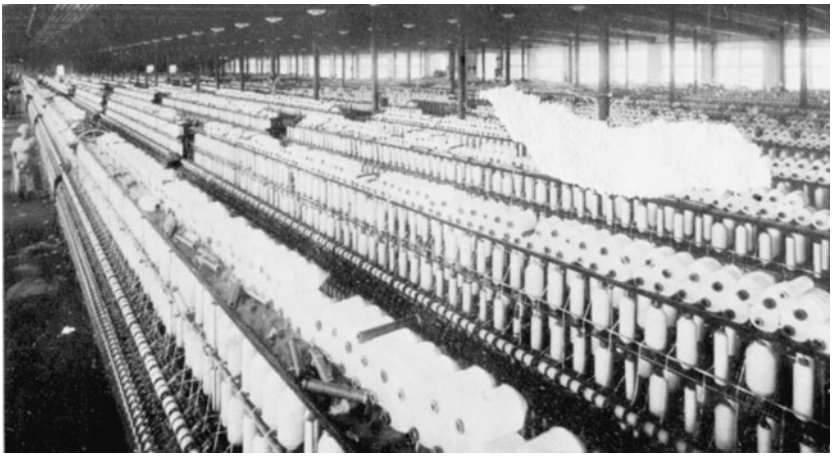
Part-time production schedules and ongoing wage cuts made it difficult for textile workers to afford union dues and for locals to build up funds that could support protracted strikes or widespread organizing campaigns. Collective action in the mills throughout the 1920s became primarily defensive in nature, with periodic bursts of activity to protest wage cuts or increased workloads. For many mill managers, it proved more economical to completely close a mill and wait out potential or actual strikes than to give in to union demands. In New England, mill slowdowns and periodic closures created a pool of surplus labor from which mill managers could easily hire operatives to replace striking workers. In the Piedmont South, these factors, in addition to the glut of southern farmers pushed off the land as wartime cotton prices fell, tempered labor-management conflicts. As industry conditions worsened through the decade, fewer individuals were willing to risk losing a valuable job by joining a union. Strikes during the 1920s, according to textile union historian Cletus Daniel, were

"usually taken as a last resort" as expressions of protest against ongoing degradations of labor standards "with little or no hope of being won."[36]

Union organizing in the textile states of the Piedmont South came to a virtual standstill by 1923. The national leadership of the UTWA, however, was not ignorant of the potential consequences of leaving the southern portion of the industry unorganized. "The day is at hand," wrote UTWA president Thomas McMahon a year earlier, "when there must be no North, no South—these terms have been used by the employers to enslave the workers—there can only be one country with the same hours of labor prevailing everywhere." The difficulty, still, was to convince the unionized mill workers in New England that they had a vested interest in helping to bring the unorganized workers in southern mills into the UTWA fold. The local-regional outlook of the majority of New England textile unions that had dominated the UTWA since its inception in 1901 deepened in the early 1920s. The greater part of southern textile operatives also assessed their situations in light of local conditions. They did not compare their wages to those of millhands in Massachusetts, but instead, to the earnings made by tenant farmers and other industrial employees in their immediate vicinity. This was a significant factor in the indifference shown by many southern millhands toward the UTWA except during moments of labor-management strife. The possibility of beginning a southern organizing campaign continued to be discussed at UTWA and AFL annual conventions. But with no massive grassroots push from operatives in either the North or South, all plans were tabled until "better conditions" prevailed in the industry.[37]

The textile industry depression, the chronic shortages of funds and declining dues-paying membership, the implacable hostility of mill owners toward unions, and the unwillingness of New England locals, many of which were themselves struggling to survive, to support southern organizing initiatives meant that southern operatives remained outside the purview of the UTWA during the 1920s. The relative strength of UTWA locals in New England dwindled as well when technological changes and the implementation of new machinery in mills throughout the region during wartime eliminated skilled jobs and displaced many of the workers who constituted the foundation of the industry's union strength.[38] As the decade progressed, southern competition as a threat to the future of the Massachusetts textile industry became, as it had been during the 1893 depression, a topic of heated debate among mill owners, unionized workers, and the state.

During the 1920s, textile manufacturers throughout Massachusetts pinpointed three causes of the state's deteriorating cotton manufacturing industry: mill owners paid Massachusetts millhands higher wages than their counter-



A spinning room at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee mill, ca. 1915. By World War I, Dwight had replaced its mule spindles with ring spindles. (Courtesy Edward Bellamy Memorial Association, Chicopee, Massachusetts)

parts in the South; Massachusetts state law mandated shorter work hours for textile operatives than southern laws; and Massachusetts levied higher taxes on mill properties than southern states. In the wake of the 1922 New England textile strikes, the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries found that the average hourly wage for Massachusetts mill operatives was $.41 compared to $.29 in North Carolina, $.24 in Georgia, $.23 in South Carolina, and $.21 in Alabama. In the textile states of the Piedmont South, moreover, legislation regulating working hours in the textile industry was scarce. Compared to Massachusetts, where the forty-eight-hour week had been in effect since 1919, in 1922 South Carolina enacted legislation limiting the maximum work week to fifty-five hours, Alabama's sixty-hour work week applied only to employees under age sixteen, and mills in North Carolina and Georgia still operated on schedules of up to sixty-six hours per week. The result of the depressed conditions prevailing in the industry, the strikes in New England, and the paucity in the South of both hours regulations and effective enforcement of them was that Massachusetts spindles operated an average of 165 hours per month in 1922, while monthly spindle operation averaged 273 hours in North Carolina, 271 hours in South Carolina, 254 hours in Georgia, and 249 hours in Alabama. According to the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries, the overall result of the wage and hours differentials—in addition to the four leading southern textile states having tax rates estimated to be over 40 percent lower than those in Massachusetts—was a production cost for standard print cloth in

Massachusetts of slightly less than $.29 per pound compared to just over $.19 per pound in mills located in the Piedmont South.[39]

A crisis mentality, not seen since the depression years of the 1890s, swept the Massachusetts cotton textile industry in the 1920s. "The past year and a half has been a period almost of panic in our New England cotton mills," noted Robert Amory, president of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers. "Mill managements, stockholders, and a growing and thoughtful part of our general public have been deeply concerned over their future. . . . [T]here has been practically no new construction. There has not even been sufficient replacement of new machinery to take care of that worn-out." Between 1920 and 1923, as the building of new mills and expansions of old mills in Massachusetts stagnated, construction in the Piedmont South continued with 221 new mills and expansions in 1921, 480 in 1922, and 469 during the first nine months of 1923. The southern industry press, meanwhile, trumpeted the news of investments made by Massachusetts textile firms and the movement of spindles to the South. Between the summer of 1923 and the summer of 1924, New Englanders spent an estimated $100 million on the purchase of existing southern mills or on the construction of new ones.[40]

"Some New England cotton mill men are hanging on by their teeth to what they have," Richard Edmonds, editor of the *Manufacturers' Record*, observed in 1925. " . . . Others have given up the unequal struggle and either moved South or liquidated." Not all Massachusetts mill owners were willing to relinquish their New England mills without a fight. But unlike during the 1893 depression, the strategy of switching from coarse- to fine-goods production as a means of escaping southern competition was no longer an option. At the turn of the century, the mainstay of southern mills continued to be the manufacture of coarse cotton goods, while limited numbers of New England textile companies converted their production solely to finer goods. Over time, finer goods manufacture expanded in both regions. By the 1920s, the South mirrored New England in its production of both coarse and fine grades of materials.[41] With New England now in direct competition with the South in virtually all cotton textile markets, the race to the bottom accelerated. Owners of Massachusetts textile companies not only cut wages, increased workloads, and began operating branch factories in the South in attempts to remain profitable, but, as had been done during the depression years of the 1890s, they also looked to the Massachusetts state legislature to repeal existing regulatory legislation as the remedy for their problems.

"One of the principal reasons for this rapid growth [in the southern industry] is the assistance our Massachusetts laws have given . . . by restricting our hours of work way below theirs," remarked Robert Amory to a 1922 gathering of New England textile manufacturers. "These laws are fostered by some workers who

believe they can get something for nothing," he claimed. "It cannot be." After World War I, Massachusetts House Representative Edith Nourse Rogers and Senators John Weeks and Henry Cabot Lodge introduced bills into Congress meant to establish a federal forty-eight-hour law applicable to workers in the textile industry. They were ultimately unsuccessful in getting the bills passed. The UTWA had also made an attempt to establish the forty-eight-hour week as standard throughout the industry in 1919. Beginning on 3 February 1919, unionized northern and southern textile operatives participated in walkouts to secure the forty-eight-hour week, but the strike for uniform working hours, which had been sidelined for the duration of the war, was ill timed. The sudden end of hostilities in Europe, the subsequent wholesale cancellation of government contracts, and the elimination of extra production shifts weakened the position of the UTWA. Some hours reductions did occur, but they often came as a result of sluggish demand and without corresponding wage increases. In 1919, mills in the southern textile states ran upwards of sixty hours per week compared to forty-eight in Massachusetts and fifty-four in New Hampshire and Rhode Island. But the 1919 goal of lowering work hours in southern mills to forty-eight per week through collective action at the workplace ended in failure, and southern mills remained places where, according to UTWA president John Golden, "the hours of labor are the longest and the conditions are the worst."[42]

A key objective of Massachusetts textile mill owners in the face of intensifying southern competition and depression conditions throughout the industry, therefore, remained the repeal of the Bay State's forty-eight-hour law. Paid representatives of individual companies and lobbyists for the Arkwright Club began a concerted effort to convince the state legislature that revoking the forty-eight-hour law was the only way to save the Massachusetts industry from ruin. "[B]y the action of its own Legislature, cotton manufacturing in Massachusetts is doomed to fold up unless its labor laws are changed," the *American Wool and Cotton Reporter* asserted. "Under the 48 hour law the cotton mills of the State are bleeding to death." Upholding the law, editors of the *Commercial Bulletin* argued, would be a "very regrettable step and likely to cause a further exodus of New England's manufacturing facilities."[43] Throughout the 1920s, the Arkwright Club succeeded in having bills introduced into the Massachusetts legislature to repeal the forty-eight-hour law. The Club tried to persuade representatives that without a change in the law, mills throughout the state would be forced to move their operations to the South or go out of business completely.

Characterizing the threatened mill closures as "a smoke screen to hide the real facts," and members of the Arkwright Club as "members of the most soulless, un-American, plutocratic combination in existence today in these United States," UTWA president Thomas McMahon and textile unionists throughout

Massachusetts rallied to confront the industry lobbyists and the wage cuts they threatened if the forty-eight-hour law remained in place. While state representatives agreed with the manufacturers that southern competition was a serious issue confronting the Massachusetts textile industry, they deemed that the solution was not to be found by rescinding the statute. In line with the unionists, the majority of legislators took the position that the standards for Massachusetts should not be lowered, but instead, all interested parties should work toward the goal of raising the hours norms that prevailed in mills throughout the South. The Massachusetts legislature revisited the issue of repealing the forty-eight-hour law during the 1923, 1924, 1927, and 1928 legislative sessions, but took no action on the subject. In 1930, the Massachusetts Industrial Commission suggested that "the Legislature establish the policy that no new laws shall be enacted that will impose burdens upon the textile industry until the laws of competing states attain the standards of Massachusetts," and that the legislature "take such action as will be conducive in securing the standardization of labor laws in all states and especially to bring about the adoption by all states of a 48-hour law similar to the law in effect in Massachusetts." The forty-eight-hour law thus remained in place and Massachusetts textile mill owners waited.[44]

As Bay State textile industry lobbyists continued their fight on Beacon Hill to repeal the forty-eight-hour law and to secure tax-relief legislation, mill managers throughout Massachusetts embraced wage cuts as the most immediate and viable solution open to them in their struggle to effectively meet southern competition. In January 1925, a new round of cuts swept the mills of the state. The Dwight Manufacturing Company, for its part, announced a 10 percent wage reduction for its Chicopee employees effective on 27 January. Unionized weavers at the Chicopee mill threatened to strike if management carried out the wage cut, which came on the heels of a another reduction during the summer of 1924 that averaged between 19 and 25 percent. Confident that there would be no union trouble from the workers in Alabama City, Chicopee superintendent J. F. Batchelor ignored the weavers' strike threat. As was the case during the 1922 Alabama City strike, company officials instituted plans to wait out any collective protest by closing the affected mill and selling the buildup of stock in the company's warehouses. If necessary, the company planned to shift production to the uninvolved Dwight branch. The wage concessions made to the Dwight Chicopee operatives in 1922 created the circumstances in which the company could avoid a strike there and break the Alabama City union. In 1925, Dwight management exploited the open-shop status quo established at the Alabama City branch three years earlier to challenge its unionized workers in Chicopee.[45]

On the day Dwight management scheduled the wage cut to go into effect, "before the looms were started . . . the weavers received word [from their union

A weave room at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee mill, ca. 1915. (Courtesy Edward Bellamy Memorial Association, Chicopee, Massachusetts)

leaders] to leave their places in protest," and 150 weavers left the Dwight mill in Chicopee. Soon after the Dwight weavers left their looms, the company announced a total mill shutdown and began a lockout of the remaining workers employed at the Chicopee mill.[46] In spite of the lockout, the Chicopee weavers initially found little support among these operatives. The fact that the organized workers themselves were members of two competing national bodies only exacerbated the departmental divisions that already existed between Dwight's employees.

In 1915 several craft unions seceded from the United Textile Workers of America and temporarily reconstituted the American Federation of Textile Operatives. The National Mulespinners' Union remained largely independent and in control of its own treasury even after its amalgamation with the UTWA in 1901. In 1925, the unionized weavers and loomfixers at Dwight's Chicopee mill belonged to the American Federation of Textile Operatives. The organized carders, spinners, and pickers remained affiliated with the United Textile Workers of America. According to UTWA historian Robert Brooks, the two unions viewed each other as "obstructionist" and were unwilling to forgo craft and union rivalries to unite, even for the larger purpose of effective organization in individual mills, let alone throughout the textile industry.[47] When the Chicopee weavers began their walkout, none of the UTWA-affiliated Dwight locals declared sympathy strikes in support of them.

Four days after the Dwight lockout began, UTWA officials met in Boston to discuss whether or not to take strike action against the wage cuts made in mills

throughout the region. UTWA president Thomas McMahon announced that the union "decided to resist the wage cuts now being made," and that he had "been instructed to get in touch with the officials of all the districts . . . for the purpose of making proper arrangements for carrying on this struggle." Still, no strike authorizations appeared for the UTWA-affiliated Dwight locals that were already locked out of the Chicopee mill.[48]

The weavers faced the prospect of receiving no help from the UTWA unions for the duration of their protest, and their fight became even more challenging because of rifts among the Dwight craft unions affiliated with the American Federation of Textile Operatives. Despite their common membership in the AFTO, the Dwight loomfixers declared themselves "not sympathetic with the striking weavers" because the weavers had not supported the fixers when they protested a 1924 summer wage cut with a short-lived walkout in September. Although locked out of the mill with the rest of the workforce in January 1925, the loomfixers said they were "not interested" in aiding the weavers.[49] The lack of cooperation continued as the weavers' strike and the lockout dragged into its fourth week, and there was no sign that the company was willing to change its policy regarding the wage cut.

Within a week of the initial walkout and shutdown at the Chicopee mill, meetings occurred among the striking weavers, Dwight mill officials, and two vice presidents of the AFTO. Superintendent Batchelor stated that the position of the company was that the weavers would "be allowed to return to work . . . under the same conditions as those existing when they went out on strike." If they chose not to, the mill would remain closed. The weavers refused, the lockout continued, and nonstriking Dwight operatives were "obliged to go home again." Twenty-seven days into the strike, the company partially reopened the mill with a workforce of employees who were willing to return. Spurred on by the mill starting again and the likelihood that the company would, therefore, operate indefinitely on the reduced pay scale if they let the weavers continue the fight alone, the following day the Dwight locals of the UTWA and the AFTO began cooperating. The UTWA members and the AFTO loomfixers declared sympathy strikes in support of the weavers. Together, they organized a general strike committee "to represent the employes [*sic*] of the Dwight mills regardless of union affiliation," and coordinated pickets for the mill gates. The strike committee also submitted the dispute to the Massachusetts Board of Conciliation and Arbitration for settlement, demanding from the company recognition of the unions, the end of fines levied against flawed goods, and the reversal of the 10 percent wage cut. Yet the day the joint UTWA-AFTO pickets began, the Dwight Chicopee mill operated for the first full day since the weavers' walkout.[50]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee mill ran intermittently as

the strike and the picketing continued through March 1925. "We still have the strike with us, but are in hopes to see it broken," Superintendent Batchelor wrote to Alabama City agent Caleb Wilkinson regarding his strategy to restart the mill with nonunion Dwight operatives and newly hired workers.[51] Union workers and their supporters, meanwhile, stood at the gates daily to heckle anyone who crossed the union line. "Two women practically threw the makings of an omelet at other women who had gone back to work," the local press reported of an incident at the end of one shift. "Eggs of a vintage not too recent and pepper and salt were hurled upon the women who had gone back into the mill." The possibility of being permanently replaced by recently hired strikebreakers, the prospect of having to vacate company housing should their jobs be filled by others, and the economic realities of having been out of work for over a month, compelled more and more Dwight workers to reenter the mill. By the end of March, Superintendent Batchelor informed Caleb Wilkinson in Alabama City that the "situation is much brighter—have 321 looms running today, with the prospects of settlement very bright," to which Wilkinson replied, "Trust . . . that soon they will see the error of their ways and flock to the mill for work."[52]

The nine-week strike at the Dwight Company's Chicopee mill officially ended on 1 April 1925 with a decision from the Massachusetts Board of Conciliation and Arbitration. "Under the terms of the agreement accepted by the strikers' committee," announced Board member Fred Knight, "no discrimination will be shown against the strikers when they return to the mills." The unions agreed to return to work on good faith that they would "be given recognition by the officials of the mills after they have gone back to their looms." Overall, however, the Dwight strikers realized few tangible results from the strike. The Board of Conciliation and Arbitration gave tacit support for union recognition of the Dwight locals but without establishing a mechanism to ensure that the company would comply with the no-discrimination, union-recognition terms of the agreement. The decisions of the board only bound the union and management for six months, and thereafter either party involved could file its intention to not follow the terms of the agreement and then do so after sixty days. The company system of fining also continued and the 10 percent wage cut remained in effect. In any future disputes with management, the agreement required the Dwight unions "before taking a strike vote, to submit any demands for adjustment of working conditions to the mill officials for settlement and investigation." The following day, J. F. Batchelor noted, "We are running about 1600 looms. . . . [T]he atmosphere has changed."[53]

Mirroring the 1893 strike at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee mill, the 1925 strike proved to be an event that would forever change the company. "To be sure, large mills cannot be moved overnight from one locality to

another and there is very considerable expense involved in moving these plants but there is a limit beyond which the managements will refuse to operate in New England," the *Commercial Bulletin* editorialized in 1923, "and that limit appears to be very near at hand." In 1893, the Chicopee strike was an integral factor in the decision made by Dwight's corporate officers to open a southern branch mill so that Dwight-made goods could remain competitive in the marketplace in the face of growing interregional competition and increasingly strict age and hours restrictions passed by the Massachusetts legislature. Thirty years after construction began on Dwight's Alabama City mill, the strike at the Chicopee mill marked the "limit" for the company. After nearly five years of struggling to make profits at the Chicopee mill, the strike was the catalyst for Dwight's corporate officers to "take action necessary to carry out a plan for the readjustment of the capital and to raise new money in order to relieve the Company from its . . . strained financial condition."[54] Unable to make payments to the House of Morgan for monies loaned during the 1915–22 Chicopee mill overhaul and unwilling to risk the possibility of additional worker militancy with a new round of wage cuts, the corporate officers of the Dwight Company sought a new, more effective way to slash operating costs and maintain the company's liquidity. The result was the decision to give up on its investment in mills, manpower, and machinery in Massachusetts and relocate all Dwight operations to its southern facility, closing the parent mill in Chicopee completely.

The permanent shutdown of the Chicopee mill did not happen immediately, but Dwight Company officials began the process of shifting production from operations in Massachusetts to the Alabama City mill in the spring of 1925. Citing the "extensive rebuilding program, followed by large losses sustained . . . during the violent period of liquidation in 1921, from the fact that business since that time has been below normal," in addition to the shortfalls due "to strikes and partial operation," the corporate officers submitted a plan whereby the company would increase its operating capital by floating new stock "to improve the current condition" of the company. During Dwight's financial retooling, the company depended almost exclusively on the cloth produced at the Alabama City mill for its sales earnings. Citing figures showing that from 1917 to 1924 the Chicopee mill registered a net loss of over $27,000 in contrast to the Alabama City mill's net profit of over two million dollars, Dwight's Clerk of Corporation George Nutting informed company stockholders that "[i]t will be observed that . . . [the] Chicopee Mill has not been a source of profit to the Company" but that "the earnings of the Alabama Mill have averaged . . . 9.9%."[55] The Chicopee mill continued operating through 1925 and 1926 but the Alabama City mill increased its share of Dwight's overall production. By November 1925, Dwight officials announced their intention to begin running the Alabama City

mill on a day and night basis that would necessitate hiring up to 1,700 more employees there.[56]

"The earnings of your Company's plant at Chicopee, Mass. have been, and still are unsatisfactory," treasurer George Nichols informed Dwight stockholders, "but the Plant at Alabama City has consistently made money and it is in hope of still further increasing these earnings that the present plan has been adopted."[57] The process of closing the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Chicopee mill gained momentum through 1926 and the company began shipping machinery from Chicopee to Alabama City. "At Chicopee . . . we have considerable machinery in excess of operating requirements," George Nichols informed Alabama City agent Allan Little. "I recommend that when you have definitely decided what machinery should be replaced in Alabama City that you advise and we would . . . help you out by sending you some machinery in good condition from Chicopee."[58]

In October 1926, the Dwight Manufacturing Company bought the Essex Cotton Mills in Newburyport, Massachusetts, with the money secured through the issuance of additional stock in 1925, so that Dwight could transfer the equipment from that facility to the Alabama City mill as well. Through 1927, the company shipped machinery and carded cotton from Newburyport and Chicopee "in carload lots as fast as ready" to Alabama City. During the summer of that year, the Dwight Company also began selling its real estate holdings. The first buildings sold were the company-owned tenements and boarding houses in Chicopee Center. Described as "one of the largest transfers of central real estate in the history of Hampden County," on 31 June 1927, the Dwight Company relinquished the titles of all of its real estate holdings, excepting the mill buildings themselves, over one hundred properties, to the Walnut Realty Trust of Chicopee.[59]

By the start of 1928, the Dwight Manufacturing Company had completely ceased operations at its Chicopee mill. In 1929, Dwight sold the mill buildings to Raphael Sagalyn of Springfield, a member of the Walnut Realty Trust group. The Dwight Company retained a small pool of approximately 180 employees at the mill who were responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and for processing shipments of machinery and supplies to Alabama City until the ownership of the mills formally transferred to Sagalyn in early 1930. The 1931 edition of the *Blue Book* textile directory officially listed the Dwight Chicopee mill as "discontinued." Sagalyn formed the Industrial Buildings Corporation with the intention of persuading small industries to locate their production in the old Dwight mill. He was initially unsuccessful, and the buildings stood vacant until 1931 when the Berkshire Upholstered Furniture Company opened a small facility in one of the Dwight mill buildings. Through the 1930s, several

small manufacturers and needlecraft businesses, seeking to tap into the skilled textile labor force already in Chicopee and the predominately nonunion, low-wage workforce there, moved into the old Dwight complex. These included the Patricia Undergarment Company, Millinery Manufacturing Company, Young Broom Company, Federal Paper Company, Universal Jewelry Case Company, and the Cutler and Schermerhorn Company.[60]

Despite the eventual establishment of small industrial concerns within Dwight's Chicopee mill, the closure of the Dwight Manufacturing Company was, according to Chicopee historian Vera Shlakman, "disastrous." The Dwight Company, one of the city's four original mills, absorbed two of the others, the Cabot Manufacturing and the Perkins Manufacturing Companies, in 1856. The Chicopee Manufacturing Company, the fourth of the original mills, sold its facilities to Johnson and Johnson for the manufacture of surgical supplies in 1916. The Dwight closure marked the city's loss of the last of Chicopee's cotton textile mills.[61]

The mill shutdown had very real consequences not only for the two thousand employees of the company who lost their jobs but also for their families, the overwhelming majority of whom depended entirely on earnings from the Dwight mill for their livelihoods. Finding work proved extremely difficult for the out-of-work Dwight operatives. Because of the ongoing industry-wide depression, few positions were available in other textile mills in the Chicopee-Springfield-Holyoke area. After spending their entire lives working in the textile industry, many Dwight operatives struggled to learn the skills necessary to find work elsewhere. For those who did find work, their lack of seniority often made them the first to be laid off as businesses and industries throughout the region curtailed their operations during the Great Depression. Historian Katherine Du Pre Lumpkin noted that 58 percent of the "displaced" textile workers in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts in 1934 were former employees of three companies, including Dwight, that were "active outside the State" or were "themselves operating plants elsewhere" while their Massachusetts mills were "dismantled and for sale."[62]

The city of Chicopee also lost its largest employer and taxpayer, and businesses throughout the community saw a substantial loss of income because of the large number of unemployed textile workers. As an absentee owner, however, the implications of the mill shutdown for the city of Chicopee was a decidedly insignificant factor in the Dwight Company's decision to move all of its operations to Alabama City. For many years, a vocal minority of Chicopee citizens criticized the Boston-based Dwight Company for its lack of interest in the wellbeing of the city. "If those absentee capitalists could be compelled to live on . . . any of the streets between Front and Exchange streets," a local Methodist

Exchange Street, Chicopee, Massachusetts, ca. 1915. (Courtesy Edward Bellamy Memorial Association, Chicopee, Massachusetts)

minister blasted from his pulpit in 1917, "we would be assured that that entire section of our city would change appearance. . . . No local person is responsible for conditions at the Dwight manufacturing company." Indeed, profits, not community welfare, drove the decision-making process of the Dwight officers in Boston. Corporate responsibility extended to Dwight shareholders and creditors over and above its employees and the community of Chicopee. The closure of the Dwight Manufacturing Company caused a "general economic demoralization" of the city that only deepened with the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929. It would be thirteen years before the small industries that moved into the old Dwight buildings could replace the two thousand jobs lost when the mill ceased production.[63]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company's closure of its Chicopee operations in 1927 was just one of a growing number of cotton textile mill closures that had occurred throughout Massachusetts by the end of the decade. The 1920s were difficult years throughout the textile industry, but lower production costs in the South meant that most Piedmont mills, while not always able to pay regular dividends to their stockholders, at least survived while increasing numbers of their New England counterparts slipped into bankruptcy. In spite of the industry-wide depression, mills in the Piedmont South continued to expand, increasing their total share of textile workers nationwide from 46 percent to 68 percent between 1923 and 1933. Within the same time period, 40 percent of all New England textile manufactories closed, resulting in the unemployment of over half of the region's textile industry workforce. Through the 1920s and early

1930s, the southern textile states supplanted New England as the leading textile manufacturing region in the United States, topping the number of wage earners and value of products manufactured in 1923, the number of active spindles in 1925, the number of total spindles in place in 1927, and the number of looms by 1931.[64]

"In Massachusetts many cotton mills have definitely gone out of business, others are discontinuing operations, and still others are in the process of liquidation," the Massachusetts Industrial Commission noted in 1930. "Most of the coarse goods business has gone from Massachusetts; only a greatly reduced proportion of the medium weight cotton goods business remains; and the fine cotton goods business is increasingly being taken over by other states." Between 1922 and 1933, ninety-three Massachusetts mills permanently closed their doors in the Bay State. Eleven of these mills, including the Dwight Manufacturing Company, were owned by textile corporations with southern branches. Between 1926 and 1931, at the peak of the state's 1922–33 wave of mill closures, seventy-one Massachusetts mills suspended operations. In 1922 the textile industry in Massachusetts employed over 111,000 workers. But by 1928 this number had declined to just over 66,000. [65]

The southern textile industry press described the Dwight Manufacturing Company's permanent closure of its Chicopee operations as "an industrial tragedy" brought about by labor legislation and unions that kept the Dwight mills in "constant turmoil and made operations irregular."[66] In reality, Massachusetts laws and the presence of organized labor in mills throughout the state were secondary problems. The root of the troubles for Massachusetts textile mills was the widespread entrance of southern-made cotton textile goods into the marketplace during the 1880s. This problem became evident during the depression years of the 1890s and resulted in increasing numbers of New England mill owners relocating their operations to the Piedmont South in the 1920s. As southern competition intensified through the turn of the century, labor standards established at the behest of unionized workers in Massachusetts through collective action at the statehouse and their workplaces had a significant impact on the wage and hour differentials between mills in the North and South, aggravating the underlying challenges presented by southern competition and New England's shrinking market share.

By the 1920s, southern competition had been an issue with which New England mill owners and unionists alike had been grappling for over thirty years, and neither state nor federal labor legislation, nor a strong interregional textile union, had developed to equalize the regional disparities in working hours and wages. The textile depression of the 1920s created conditions under which New England mill owners could no longer make profits because of the lack of

production-cost parity between North and South. This reality of southern competition and its bearing on the long-term future of the New England cotton textile industry truly made itself known. Within the context of the industry-wide depression, the wage and hour differentials between the regions and the higher numbers of unions in the New England mills pushed mill owners to relocate in the South; the combination of "advantages" in the form of cheap and unorganized labor, low taxes, and the probusiness climate created by state and local governments pulled them southward.

Indeed, by the 1920s new construction and expansions of mills in Massachusetts became "more or less a curiosity," and the accelerating decline of the region's textile industry began. "We find the South rapidly developing. . . . New England is only standing still, if we are even maintaining our own," Norman Case, governor of Rhode Island, pointed out to the members of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers. The leadership of the UTWA, meanwhile, chastised mill managers for their greed, arguing that they could still make money in New England but chose to close their mills and relocate so that they could make higher profits on the backs of poorly paid, unorganized southern operatives. "It will do the New England section no harm," goaded UTWA president Thomas McMahon in 1927 in his ongoing war of words with mill owners, "if these jelly fish backboned incompetents moved to some other part of our country where they can carry on the exploitation of women and children for the sake of dividends."[67] The cyclical blame game continued as industry spokesmen responded that textile unionists were at fault for driving them out of business through strikes and the passage of restrictive labor legislation. As Massachusetts textile mill owners and the UTWA continued to exchange mutual recriminations about the sorry condition of the state's textile industry, the Great Depression began, and textile workers North and South once again embraced the possibility of bringing about change through collective action and interregional cooperation.

CHAPTER SIX

"Dissatisfaction among Labor"

The 1934 General Strike

"The conditions in many parts of New England are nothing short of tragic, not only from the textile workers' point of view . . . but also from the point of view of entire cities and towns where textile mills exist," UTWA president Thomas McMahon told journalist Louis Adamic in 1931. "[M]ost of the mill towns," McMahon concluded, "are sad, sad places." As the textile industry depression of the 1920s gave way to a nationwide depression by 1929, textile workers throughout New England, still reeling from the mill closures and relocations to the South that occurred throughout the decade, saw their working and living conditions go from bad to worse as short-time production, shutdowns, and layoffs ravaged the region. By the winter of 1931, an estimated 40 percent of the 280,000 textile operatives in New England were unemployed, while the majority of those who still had jobs worked only one or two days a week.[1] Mill operatives in the Piedmont South also felt the pinch of the Great Depression as management, seeking to cut production costs to the bone, slashed wages and the numbers of workers on company payrolls, pushing those employees who remained in the mills to the breaking point by speeding up machinery and increasing workloads. Conditions throughout the textile industry worsened. Southern mill operatives sought redress for their grievances through collective action and through the implicit mandate for change they saw in New Deal legislation, ushering in an unprecedented period of worker militancy in the industry and making possible the creation of a viable national textile union. Millhands' hopes and frustrations climaxed in 1934, resulting in the largest general strike in the history of American labor.

Throughout the 1920s, the membership base of the United Textile Workers of America was seriously eroded. Open-shop drives in mills nationwide, coupled with the depressed condition of the industry, erased the organizational gains made during World War I. In New England, especially in Massachusetts, the UTWA watched its largest center of unionized operatives deteriorate as owners liquidated the holdings of mill after mill, often investing their monies in manufactories located below the Mason-Dixon Line. Seeking to shore up its north-

eastern union base in the face of mill closures, wage cuts, and union busting, in 1923 the UTWA's national leadership proposed a partnership with management that would exchange union recognition for cooperative work toward a common goal of lower labor costs and increased output to help the mills more efficiently meet southern competition. "[T]he greatest future source of increased efficiency, higher production and lower cost lies through a new and better relationship between employer and employee," maintained one textile unionist. "To replace distrust and antagonism by mutual confidence and co-operation would . . . do more to place the New England textile industry in a position of advantage in relation to the South than any other occurrence." Selling itself as an organization that could allay potentially costly labor-capital disputes, the UTWA hoped that it would not only buttress its locals throughout New England but help save a rapidly declining regional industry as well.[2]

The UTWA had little success with this union-management cooperation strategy. The overwhelming majority of New England mill owners rejected any notion of union recognition, let alone giving organized labor a say in the day-to-day management of mills or in a company's overall corporate strategy.[3] Thus textile unionists in New England remained faced with the issues of southern competition, the cost-cutting measures owners implemented to combat it, and runaway mills. With no organizational base to speak of in the leading southern textile states, the UTWA found itself powerless to bring southern wages and hours standards into line with those in New England.

The UTWA, however, recoiled from the prospect of a southern organizing campaign. Depression conditions, limited funds, and a vast reserve of labor wanting work in the southern mills made the success of such a venture seem unlikely. The hostility of employers and the local and regional press to unions of any kind, moreover, made the odds against the UTWA and the successful organization of the southern workforce appear too high. But by the end of the 1920s, textile mill operatives throughout the Piedmont South began challenging management in a series of uncoordinated strikes undertaken by self-organized, "homegrown" unions. These organizations meant to protest the deterioration of labor standards resulting from years of wage reductions and the "stretch-out," a term used by mill workers to describe the managerial practice of increasing the number of looms or spindles assigned to an individual operative, usually with no increase in pay. Textile mill management used the stretch-out through the 1920s and 1930s to cut labor costs by increasing production output without having to augment the workforce. In numerous mills, the stretch-out was also used as a way to downsize a workforce without slowing production. In 1925, UTWA president Thomas McMahon noted that within two decades, the number of looms a weaver tended increased "from six and eight to an individual to

thirty-six and forty-eight, and in some instances to seventy-two with an increase in the speed of the loom."[4]

The outburst of union militancy in mills throughout Tennessee and North and South Carolina, especially in major textile centers like Henderson, Gastonia, and Marion, North Carolina, and Elizabethton, Tennessee, offered the UTWA a chance to put behind it all its previous failed attempts to unionize the Piedmont South and an opportunity to establish a union beachhead in the region. "The advantage which the South has had in its freedom from labor disputes is beginning to decline," the Massachusetts Industrial Commission announced, citing figures for 1929 showing that in the "cotton-growing states" there were 16,331 workers involved in thirty-four strikes, compared to 4,366 workers involved in thirty strikes in New England. The moment was right for the UTWA to tap into the anger and frustrations felt by southern operatives, and to begin the concerted organizing campaign that had been on the backburner since 1922. The union hoped to finally be able to equalize regional conditions by establishing a firm presence in mills throughout the Piedmont South. "The Southern workers are now ready for organization," UTWA president Thomas McMahon noted after a 1927 strike at the Harriet Mill in Henderson, North Carolina. "Many localities are clamoring for organizers. A new era in the South is about to dawn."[5]

By 1928, the organizing fever spread to unionists in Alabama as well. "Considering the number of employees in the mills of this district and the conditions under which they work," Earle Parkhurst, organizer for the Alabama State Federation of Labor, noted, "the most need for organization of any craft in Anniston and Gadsden . . . is for the organization of these people." The UTWA, however, initially limited its attention to the locales where spontaneous walkouts occurred, seeking to assume leadership ahead of other unions, like the communist-led National Textile Workers Union. Places such as the Dwight mill in Alabama City, where the union had been broken at the beginning of the decade and the workers did not reorganize, therefore, remained open-shop bastions. A year after his initial call for organization among the mill workers of the Gadsden area, Parkhurst declared in 1929 that "conditions there are fast becoming unbearable and right under our very noses in our own state we are allowing a menace to survive which will soon class along with Elizabethton, Herrin, and other hell-holes of the past."[6]

It was not until the AFL's 1929 annual convention that UTWA delegates introduced a resolution to authorize the national leadership of the AFL to raise funds for an all-out southern organizing drive focused on textiles, the region's largest industry. The delegates argued that the time was right to address the long-standing grievances of long hours, low wages, the stretch-out, and poor

living and working conditions in mill villages throughout the South. The AFL's Executive Council called for a strategizing conference to be held in November, and at this meeting delegates set January 1930 as the start date for the long-awaited southern organizing drive. The planning committee called on each AFL-affiliated union to provide at least one organizer for the drive and to give financial contributions from their union treasuries to aid the cash-poor UTWA. The planners also decided to direct the campaign through a coordinating committee whose headquarters would be located in one southern city. AFL president William Green announced at the two-day opening convention of the southern organizing drive held in Charlotte, North Carolina, on 6 and 7 January 1930 that, because of the strong union presence in the city's skilled trades and in the surrounding coal mining areas, the coordinating committee would be located in Birmingham, Alabama. Green named AFL organizer Paul Smith, UTWA vice president Francis Gorman, and W. C. Birthright of the Tennessee State Federation of Labor as the leaders of the Birmingham-based Southern Organizing Committee.[7]

From the outset, differences of opinion about the most effective means for organizing the textile industry's workforce infected the southern drive and threatened to undermine the entire campaign. Citing the fervently antiunion attitudes held by the region's textile mill owners, southern UTWA delegates at the Charlotte kickoff convention urged a militant organizing strategy. Any other tactic, they contended, would be doomed to failure. AFL president William Green, however, urged a more conservative approach. He championed a union-management cooperation strategy and a campaign based on trying to win over employers and the public by couching the AFL-affiliated unions as conservative, respectable, and concerned with helping management meet its goals of efficient, profitable production. As southern delegates pushed for directly challenging employers through strike actions, New England delegates were cautious. The 1920s history of failed strikes and the empty treasuries that resulted remained fresh in their minds and ultimately mitigated support for the proposed aggressive approach. Green argued that southern textile mill owners would accept the UTWA as a common-sense alternative to more radical groups, like the communist-led National Textile Workers Union that took charge of the locally initiated and ultimately highly publicized 1929 strike at the Loray Mill in Gastonia, North Carolina. His conservative strategy won the day. Green toured the South through 1930 to acquaint managers, workers, and the public alike with his message of cooperation, while AFL consulting engineer Geoffrey Brown approached individual textile mill owners with detailed information on how to establish workable systems of union-management cooperation in their manufactories.[8]

During the spring of 1930, the southern organizing drive reached the open-shop haven of Gadsden and the UTWA successfully organized the 375 employees of the Sauquoit Spinning Company located there. "In Alabama and Georgia our locals are growing in leaps and bounds," reported UTWA organizer W. A. Livingston from Huntsville, Alabama. "The people are flocking to the union in droves where we have our organization started. . . . Never before in the history of the South have the textile employees shown such determination to form an organization." By September, the AFL claimed that the southern drive had succeeded in establishing 31 new UTWA-affiliated unions out of the 112 total new AFL locals formed in the region. Still, while the unionization drive was able to organize locals in a handful of southern textile mills, it did not meet the ambitious expectations of many in the UTWA. Southern mill owners, including those at the Dwight Manufacturing Company, rejected the AFL's union-management cooperation message outright, and the UTWA failed to reach more than a small minority of the potential rank and file throughout the region. Indeed, David Clark, editor of the *Southern Textile Bulletin*, immediately characterized the AFL effort as "nothing more or less than a grandstand play," adding that "before it attempts to organize southern textile mills," the UTWA "should be forced to speak of their record in New England . . . one of failure from every standpoint except the collection of dues."[9]

The Birmingham coordinating office, likewise, found its resources quickly strained as the financial and manpower support pledged by delegates of AFL unions nationwide at the opening of the southern campaign failed to materialize. Although at the November 1929 planning session union leaders had proposed using over one hundred organizers, the actual number of organizers in the field between January 1930 and September 1931 varied from month to month, averaging only forty organizers, five of whom worked directly for the UTWA.[10]

Organizers also made few inroads in the region's textile industry because mill owners simply would not willingly accept any form of organization in their mills that they did not directly control, no matter how conservative. Southern mill owners were unwilling to surrender any advantage they had over their New England competitors, and the deepening of the nationwide depression only strengthened management's determination to maintain complete authority and autonomy over decisions concerning wages, hours, and workloads. Southern mill owners refused to recognize or negotiate with newly organized UTWA locals, and thus, the union had no real bargaining power. Mill supervisors stymied additional membership gains by regularly discharging the leaders of local unions and evicting them from company housing, making them examples of what would happen to anyone who joined or would not renounce their union

membership. As 1931 began, the AFL southern organizing campaign was short of money and organizers. Worsening economic conditions fueled new rounds of production cuts and mill closures throughout the textile industry nationwide. The January 1931 failure of a highly publicized strike, which resulted in a staggering UTWA defeat at the Dan River Mills in Danville, Virginia, marked the unofficial end of the AFL's organizing campaign in the textile mills of the Piedmont South.[11]

"The textile workers' situation at the moment is due not only or even mainly to the current business depression," UTWA president Thomas McMahon bemoaned in 1931, "but is for the most part a result of immensely complicated and chaotic forces within the textile industry itself, which have worked against them in a cruel conspiracy, and over which they as individuals or even we as a union have no control." McMahon admitted that in the face of employer resistance and depressed economic conditions, the AFL's campaign to organize southern millhands and to raise their working standards through widespread unionization had failed. The UTWA's New England base, meanwhile, continued to deteriorate and the union struggled to maintain its core there. With ongoing mill closures and layoffs due to the depression, the ranks of unemployed textile workers throughout the country grew. Mills north and south ran at a fraction of their productive capacities as prices and demand for textile goods precipitously declined. Profits in the industry, even in the South, nearly ceased to exist between 1930 and 1931. Within two years of the 1931 Danville defeat, the UTWA's national membership had dropped below 32,000, the lowest in the union's history.[12]

Though their efforts largely failed through the 1920s and into the first years of the 1930s, textile operatives embraced organization as the means through which they could combat the worst effects of the depression that ravaged the industry. So too did northern and southern manufacturers attempt to work collectively as they sought ways to bring health back to the trade. Many textile manufacturers had realized by the early 1920s that the standard practice of cutting costs and increasing production in their attempts to undersell competitors did little more than create a condition where supply outpaced demand, resulting in flooded markets, even lower prices, and a vicious cycle of overproduction. "In an industry such as ours, cooperation through an association is absolutely vital. We must realize that the cotton manufacturing industry is . . . divided into many units, no one mill or group of mills controls over five percent of the production of cotton goods," Robert Amory, president of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers, noted in 1923. "With such intense competition," he implored, "it is important that some of its bitterness be avoided . . . for the general good of the industry." The fundamental problem, however, was that no workable system

was in place to regulate the output of the hundreds of individual mills scattered throughout the country. While condemning the prevailing system of cutthroat competition, mill owners, risking the loss of their place in the market, would not voluntarily curtail production unless all other mills did the same. Until some way of coordinating output could be developed and enforced industry wide, the inherently destructive price wars would continue to the detriment of textile mill owners and workers alike.[13]

Seeking to find possible solutions to the industry's troubles, in 1926 mill owners created the Cotton Textile Institute (CTI). Described as "a cooperative effort to obtain an intelligent grasp of the market problems of cotton manufacturers," the goal of the CTI was to control the production and pricing of manufactured cotton textile goods. By the end of its first year, the trade association represented an estimated fifteen million spindles nationwide. Hoping that it could mitigate the effects of southern competition on the northern portion of the industry, New England manufacturers praised the CTI for facilitating "closer cooperation between manufacturers," saying that it had "become generally recognized that our problems are no longer sectional, but are national."[14]

In 1930, the CTI focused its efforts on setting production standards through establishing ceilings for hours of mill operation, proposing in January that mills limit their operations to day shifts of no more than fifty-five hours per week and night shifts of no more than fifty hours a week. Nine months later, the association also called for the elimination of night work for women and all workers under eighteen years old. By 1932, owners of cotton textile mills representing over 80 percent of the industry's spindles nationwide claimed they participated in the CTI's hours limitation initiatives.[15]

The Cotton Textile Institute succeeded in getting many of the cotton textile mills in the United States to observe its hours restrictions. The production standards, however, did little to alleviate the distress felt throughout the industry or fix the fundamental problems that plagued it. Because participation in the CTI's programs was voluntary, individual mills could ignore the association's standards and often did. Some mill owners did not cooperate with the Institute at all, while others only complied intermittently, setting their own production standards when periodic changes in market conditions made it favorable to do so.[16] For New England's textile manufacturers, the CTI's recommendations did little to alter their mill operations. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire already had laws that set age and hour standards that were at or below the fifty-five-hour day-work recommendation made by the CTI, and age and hours laws had significantly curtailed night work throughout New England years before.

While southern compliance with CTI proposals did marginally decrease over-

all output, for New Englanders the fact remained that textiles made in southern mills continued to undersell theirs because of the higher wages paid and shorter hours worked in northern mills. "If, as is expected, these voluntary limitations of working hours will be largely adopted," the Massachusetts Industrial Commission commented on the CTI's hours recommendations in 1930, "they represent excellent moves in the right direction though it will still leave Massachusetts as the only state with a limit of forty-eight hours per week." The CTI's restrictions, in the end, were not stringent enough. Even if there had been 100 percent participation, the CTI did not have the ability to stop the perpetual glut of supply and to raise prices. Because of its limited successes, after Franklin Delano Roosevelt's inauguration as president of the United States in 1933, the CTI embraced the possibility of using federal legislation to help them effect the changes in production standards impossible to implement under a system of voluntary self-regulation.[17]

The goal of some of the first legislation drafted as part of the New Deal was to stem the tide of the Great Depression by stabilizing industrial production, putting people back to work, and increasing purchasing power nationwide. On 16 June 1933, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) to meet these objectives. The National Recovery Administration (NRA), established to oversee the implementation of the NIRA, would give government backing to and force compliance with the types of restrictions that the Cotton Textile Institute had been recommending for the textile industry since 1926. Title I of the NIRA authorized establishing trade associations and mandated them to establish codes of fair competition for individual industries throughout the country. In effect, the NIRA sanctioned by federal law the restriction of trade and competition through the fixing of prices, wages, and production schedules. As a tradeoff for this relaxation of antitrust laws that would ostensibly benefit the business community, the NIRA also included Section 7(a), which stipulated that each industry code contain provisions ensuring the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively through unions of their own choosing. Representatives of the cotton textile industry, working under the supervision of NRA director Hugh Johnson, drafted the first code.[18]

It was evident from the start, however, that organized labor would have virtually no voice in the process of writing or administering the Cotton Textile Code. The mill owners who had been leaders of the now-defunct Cotton Textile Institute, in effect, became the members of the Cotton Textile Industrial Committee that drafted the code. They also became the members of the Code Authority, chaired by former CTI head George Sloan and established to oversee the code's provisions. When the Cotton Textile Code went into effect on 17 July 1933, it set the maximum hours a mill could run weekly to two shifts of no more than

forty hours each, and it established a minimum weekly wage for a forty-hour week of twelve dollars in the South and thirteen dollars in the Northeast. It also outlawed the employment of anyone under sixteen years of age, placed limits on mill expansions and the installation of new machinery, and allowed for further production restrictions with approval from the NRA director. Article VIII of the code included provisions for employee representation as stipulated in Section 7(a) of the NIRA.[19]

The national leadership of the UTWA, even without having a say in its drafting or its implementation, nonetheless embraced the Cotton Textile Code, as did the rank and file. "Most of us when Roosevelt got elected we just felt like here is a man who is a friend of the common man. And the sky was the limit," said Alabama textile union organizer and former Dwight Manufacturing Company employee Eula McGill. Dwight unionist Burns Cox concurred: "We came out in the openin' after we got the knowledge that Franklin D. Roosevelt was a laborin' man." The union anticipated that it would see long-term membership gains and realize organizational stability from Section 7(a), as well as from its general support of the Roosevelt administration and New Deal initiatives. The union had faith that mill operatives would be put back to work and benefit from the code's wage and hour provisions. The code, UTWA leaders hoped, would help the union achieve its long-standing goal of equalizing conditions between New England and the South.[20]

The Cotton Textile Code did help bring North-South wage and hour standards closer than they had ever been before. Southern mills significantly curtailed operations from previous operating schedules of up to 110 hours per week. Between October 1933 and March 1934, the code reduced the average hours worked throughout the industry by 25 percent. The minimum wage stipulations of the code also worked to bring regional wages into line with one another. Despite the one-dollar-per-week regional wage differential, the Cotton Textile Code increased average hourly earnings throughout the industry by 67 percent and decreased the North-South wage differential to its lowest point ever. Because of this, southern mill owners often attacked the wage provisions, which hit them much harder than their New England counterparts, as potentially damaging to the region's recently established dominance in the industry. "Operation of existing codes . . . are in favor of the New England mills and against Southern mills," opined one southerner. "This shifting in the tide of textile development is of intense concern to the South. . . . This tide flowed strong for a good many years with the result that the South finally wrested supremacy from New England. . . . To surrender this supremacy to New England would be to work a colossal injustice." Southern mill owners had reason to vocalize their opposition to the code's wage provisions. Immediately before the code went into effect,

wages earned by cotton textile operatives in the North were nearly 39 percent higher than those in the South. The code reduced this disparity to 18 percent by early 1934.[21]

In practice, however, the code failed to meet the expectations of NRA officials, the Cotton Code Authority, and of individual mill owners throughout the country. The Cotton Textile Code briefly succeeded in raising wages for many mill operatives. It likewise helped to increase demand and raise prices for cotton textile goods. Yet as early as October 1933, demand stagnated, prices dropped below the cost of production, and mill warehouses throughout the country quickly accumulated surplus inventories. Southern mills had significantly curtailed operations according to the eighty-hour-per-week maximum set in the code. But overproduction continued as numerous textile mills in New England began operating on increased production schedules in a bid to replace the goods that would have been on the market had mills in the South continued to run on a day-night basis for over one hundred hours a week. The Code Authority attempted to fix the situation by curtailing production further and put into effect a new operating schedule. Set to last ninety days, this curtailment went into effect in November 1933 and set sixty hours per week as the new maximum. By the beginning of 1934 though, the Cotton Textile Code still had not been able to stabilize the industry, and code restrictions did not bring production into line with demand.[22]

The Cotton Textile Code also failed to measure up to the hopes of the nation's textile operatives, especially the thousands who poured into the ranks of the United Textile Workers of America under its collective bargaining provisions. In many cases, the Cotton Textile Code did not put people back to work at wages higher than those earned before, and in fact, often had the opposite effect. The standardization of production schedules initially translated into jobs for many, especially for New England operatives who had been laid off and for those who had jobs but worked in mills that were open only part time. Nevertheless, as prices stagnated and the Code Authority curtailed maximum weekly production hours to sixty in November 1933, large numbers of New England's cotton textile workforce who had been put back to work lost their jobs once again. The impact of the minimum wage stipulations, likewise, was not always positive. Mill owners throughout New England interpreted the minimum of thirteen dollars per week for forty hours of work as the maximum they had to pay as well. The code had the potential for and sometimes did translate into wage cuts for semiskilled and skilled operatives in mills throughout the region.[23]

For southern operatives, too, the Cotton Textile Code had negative effects. The Dwight Manufacturing Company, like mills throughout the country, sped up its operations so that it could produce as many goods as possible before the

Cotton Textile Code, which mill owners correctly assumed would drive production costs up, went into effect. In May 1933, the company hired an additional 650 operatives and began running on a twenty-four-hour day-night basis. Dwight management restricted its operating hours to eighty as mandated by the code as of 17 July but also laid off these 650 workers. Dwight employees complained that many of those staying on the job were friends and family of the "bosses," and that supervisors began increasing workloads to keep production levels high.[24]

Individual mill owners in the region, moreover, devised practices meant to circumvent the code's rules once they went into effect. In spite of the code's hours stipulations, many southern mill managers used the stretch-out to ensure that their labor costs would remain lower and output of goods would continue to be higher than mills in New England operating on the same schedules. Operatives throughout the Piedmont South found themselves doing the same amount of work, and sometimes more, than before implementation of the code's hours curtailments. "The Dwight Manufacturing Company of Alabama City, Alabama is going to the greatest possible extremes on the 'Stretch-out' system," wrote Dwight operative H. S. Busy to NRA head Hugh Johnson in August 1933. "This stretch out system in textile mill's are killing people," H. C. Bell echoed. "In 1929, I Run 10 looms Now I Run 50 looms." The Cotton Textile Code was supposed to be a means through which the industry would not only be revitalized but would also provide gainful employment for the thousands of millhands who had been victims of the depression's mill closures. In actuality, between August 1933 and August 1934, an additional fifty thousand cotton textile workers nationwide lost their jobs.[25]

Southern textile mill owners also found ways around paying the Cotton Textile Code's twelve-dollar minimum wage. The most effective means of doing this was to reclassify the jobs that operatives held so that according to the exemptions from the minimum wage provisions enumerated in the code, they could pay them less. Management began designating their operatives as "yard help," listing white workers as "negro help," and designating employees who had been working for the company for years as "helpers" or as "apprentices." W. A. Pepper, an elevator operator in the card room of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill, for example, earned $9.22 a week before the recovery plan began. Within a week of the code going into effect, management reclassified him as yard help. Even though Pepper held the same position in the card room, by reclassifying him the company could pay Pepper $8.40 for forty hours of work instead of the $12 he should have received under the code's minimum wage provisions. "I know of many others," Pepper declared, "that they transferred that way to get out of paying the 12.00." Georgia Thurman com-

plained to code officials that the Dwight Company "is not paying code wages at all and nearly all the Hands even those that was raised in this mill are put on apprentice Pay Roll." There were "[l]ots of other ways they are violating the code," Thurman added. "Take a week to tell it all."[26]

One of the "lots of other ways" the management of the Dwight Manufacturing Company and textile mills throughout the country broke the Cotton Textile Code was by ignoring the protections afforded to workers who wanted to join a union. When Congress passed the NIRA in July 1933, thousands of textile workers, especially those employed in the mills of the Piedmont South, embraced the organizing possibilities of Section 7(a) and its embodiment in Article VIII of the Cotton Textile Code. The national leadership of the UTWA was especially optimistic that the NIRA gave them the backing necessary to establish a robust national union with a substantial southern membership. Even in the absence of a structured southern organizing campaign, mill workers formed unions at their workplaces and flooded the UTWA with requests for local charters. UTWA affiliations skyrocketed as the union issued over six hundred charters to new locals in twelve months. Membership jumped from an estimated forty thousand in September 1933 to more than three hundred thousand within a year. In July 1933, over a decade after management at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill successfully broke the textile union there, Dwight employees reestablished a UTWA local. It was one of twenty-five textile unions chartered in Alabama by the summer of 1934. Believing that they had the power of the federal government behind them, Dwight employees, as part of a nationwide trend, organized. Despite the staunch opposition they had received from employers in the past, they sought to use collective action to redress their grievances over the conditions in which they lived and labored.[27]

Throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s, Gadsden had been one of the most virulently antiunion cities in the South. Residents of the community overwhelmingly supported the open-shop movement initiated by Gadsden business groups in 1923. In 1932, the city of Gadsden annexed Alabama City because the depression had plunged Alabama City into such financial difficulties that it could not meet its debt obligations and still provide the services "necessary to the health, safety, protection and education of the people." Before this happened, however, the two towns had already forged a mutual bond of antiunion sentiment. The Dwight Manufacturing Company, the Gulf States Steel Company, and the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, with nearly seven thousand employees combined, were the three largest employers in the area. "Well don't you know in the early '30s when the'as tryin' to organize the mill and the . . . Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, and the Gulf States Steel, the companies had hired these labor spies," Eula McGill recalled. "The whole town was fightin'

the union. . . . [T]hey had war up here." According to historian Wayne Flynt, these three companies "[a]ided by a community eager to attract industry and keep out unions . . . made Gadsden a major battleground."[28]

Although Alabama City ceased to be an independent entity, the Dwight Manufacturing Company continued to dominate the day-to-day management of the community's affairs and remained the owner of hundreds of properties within the mill village. The company's control over Alabama City included its labor policies. The owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company contended that the presence of organized labor in its mill was unacceptable because it could limit management's prerogative to run the mill as it pleased. The company railed against the prospect of increasing wages and decreasing workloads to meet a union's demands, arguing that to do so would drive up costs and hamper the company's competitiveness in the marketplace. By May 1934, however, L. W. Parnell, vice president of the Anniston-Gadsden district, reported to the delegates of the Alabama State Federation of Labor that Gadsden had "some good local unions in the textile and steel industries, and our growth in other unions have been gradual and consistent." Workers at the Dwight Manufacturing Company had organized UTWA Local 1878, but, as Parnell added, doing so was "much harder on account of antagonistic influences."[29]

Indeed, organizing Local 1878 had been an uphill battle. Using the closed mills in Chicopee, Massachusetts, as evidence of what a union presence could do to undermine a company's ability to remain profitable, Dwight's owners vowed to keep its Alabama operations union free and surreptitiously violated the collective bargaining provisions of the Cotton Textile Code. Dwight management continued to use union-busting tactics that had been successful in the past. The company refused to recognize any "third party" bargaining agent, fired the leaders and organizers of the Dwight UTWA local, hired nonunion workers as their replacements, and evicted the terminated operatives from company housing. "We got together and decided we wanted a union and we'd have to go into the woods up here to make our meetings," Burns Cox recollected, " . . . because they'd fire you, throw your stuff out of the damned mill! . . . Usually anybody'd say anything about a union them days was a dead duck."[30]

Dwight employees, as Burns Cox went on to say "got brave and . . . came out of hiding" when the NIRA went into effect and began reporting the company's intransigence toward union members to the administrators of the Cotton Textile Code almost immediately after the code's implementation. "I have at various times talked to other employees regarding the union and some of them gave me applications for membership in the union at Alabama City, Alabama," noted Dwight employee Denton Taylor in September 1933. "[M]y foreman told me they could not use me any longer," he continued. "After they laid me off they

put a boy in my place and gave him my job. This boy . . . did not belong to the union." A month later, A. A. Sewall, secretary-treasurer of the Alabama City UTWA local, reported that a request the local made to the Dwight Company's management to meet "and try to settle some of the grievances" of the union's members was refused by the mill superintendent who said "they was not going to have any thing to do with it." Three weeks after the union's request for a meeting was rebuffed, Dwight operative Emory Smith received treatment from management similar to that documented by organizer Denton Taylor. "About ten days before I was laid off I was elected vice president of our local Union," he said. "On Saturday afternoon after my election I gave a short talk or address on the Square in Alabama City, in favor of the Union."[31]

Because it wanted to create a perception of compliance with the Cotton Textile Code's provisions, however, the Dwight Company could not simply fire every member of the Alabama City UTWA local. Dwight management, therefore, took steps to make it appear that the firings of union workers happened not because of their UTWA membership but because of on-the-job incompetence. A twenty-year employee of the Dwight Company told how her boss "had my work checked for two days" and "after finding a mistake he layed me off for good," presumably because a mill supervisor saw her marching in Gadsden's Labor Day parade. Dwight management also used intimidation tactics to keep workers from joining the union and to get those who were already members to renounce their association with the local. After eleven years of working for the Dwight Manufacturing Company "without trouble or complaint about my work," Will McCain noted that he joined the Alabama City union, and when asked by his overseer, S. L. Long, if he had become a union member, McCain responded that "it was no more than my right, an no more than many others had done and would do." Long told McCain in return that McCain "knew what it meant to join," and Long laid off McCain the next day. A month later department supervisor Walter Enterkin fired J. W. Carter for carelessness on the job. Carter said that Enterkin thought that the union members were "nothing but peacebreakers" and that he later received word from another millhand that if he "would stay away from those Union meetings" Enterkin would give Carter "a better job."[32]

The Dwight operatives and their counterparts throughout the country lodged their complaints with various NRA officials, assuming that their written protests would be taken seriously and that the abuses of the code that they labored under daily would be corrected. "I think that because of the fact that the whole political climate had changed give people encouragement that they weren't as afraid of losin' their job," Eula McGill asserted, "and if they did lose their job, they felt that they had the law that would be enforced." What these men

and women encountered, however, was a bureaucracy dominated by the mill men who wrote the Cotton Textile Code and oversaw its administration, men unsympathetic to the workers' grievances and who ignored even the most blatant violations of the code's provisions. Textile workers' letters and sworn statements cataloging the ways their employers and immediate supervisors broke the Cotton Textile Code traveled through a maze of local, state, and district committees before reaching the Cotton Textile National Industrial Relations Board, which had been established to investigate code violations and to oversee and appoint state oversight committees. Dubbed the "Bruere Board" after its chairman, Robert Bruere, the Cotton Textile National Industrial Relations Board determined whether or not workers' complaints warranted further investigation. In response to their letters and sworn statements, mill operatives usually received form letters that included a copy of the articles of the Cotton Textile Code applicable to the complaint and informed that "if, after reading the enclosed . . . you are in doubt as to procedure, the committee would be glad to have you write again."[33]

Members of the Cotton Textile Code bureaucracy, moreover, usually took the word of mill managers at face value, despite overwhelming evidence of what came to be known as "code chiseling." In answers to letters and affidavits from employees of the Dwight Manufacturing Company contending that overseers fired workers because of their union membership, for example, code complaint investigator E. O. Fitzsimmons, basing his decision on sworn statements by Dwight overseers that they had never "discharged or caused to be discharged any employee" because of union affiliation, told the employees that "[t]he management assured me that they had not discriminated against the union or its members in any way, and that they were familiar with the provisions of article VIII of the Code and were living up to it."[34]

In the rare instances where workers' complaints were determined to be true, "The correct interpretation [of the Cotton Textile Code articles] was explained to the management" and the matter was usually settled after assurances "that future application would be made . . . in accordance with the code." As cited by the authors of *Like a Family*, from August 1933 to August 1934 the Bruere Board received 3,920 complaints, conducted 96 investigations, and ruled only once against management.[35]

The bureaucratic labyrinth set up to administer the Cotton Textile Code, and the ongoing degradations experienced by the workers not only at the Dwight Manufacturing Company but in mills throughout the Piedmont South, engendered deep feelings of resentment against employers. "There is more dissatisfaction among labor now than I have ever seen," vented Dwight boilerman W. L. Hilton in a letter to Hugh Johnson. "If the administration isnt going to

see that Industry and Business live to these Code an N.R.A. why they might as well throw up hands and quit for Employers in the South are sure as-not going to do untill they are forced to it." The disconnect that existed between the rank and file and the national leadership of the UTWA only compounded this sense of aggravation. Organizers continued to establish UTWA locals in previously unorganized mills throughout the country, but because UTWA president Thomas McMahon urged cooperation with and settling grievances through the administrative bureaucracy of the Cotton Textile Code, he appeared to the rank and file as unconcerned about their immediate needs. As early as the fall of 1933, sporadic strikes occurred in individual mills in the Piedmont South, and the UTWA national leadership began receiving requests from locals throughout the country that they be allowed to strike. McMahon nevertheless, hoping to prevent a rift between the Roosevelt administration and the union, maintained that the best approach to the situation of code chiseling was to allow him to continue to try to use the union's influence to extract concessions and secure better enforcement of the code's provisions through the machinery set up by the Bruere Board. Board officials, however, ignored protests lodged by McMahon over various abuses as readily as they ignored those from the millhands themselves.[36]

Discontent at the grassroots level reached a boiling point during the spring of 1934 when Hugh Johnson approved the Cotton Textile Code Authority's request for another round of production cuts. These cuts would once again reduce for up to ninety days the maximum hours a mill could run per week from eighty to sixty. As was the case with the November 1933 changes in operating hours, the hourly wage rate for workers remained the same but their weekly shifts dropped from forty to thirty hours. This meant that, in effect, the code's minimum wage of twelve dollars per week became nine dollars per week, and that earnings would be even lower for those millhands who had been reclassified by management or who worked in mills that chose not to operate on full schedules. On 28 May 1934, UTWA vice president Francis Gorman, responding to the disgruntlement rampant in mills throughout the country, threatened a general strike to begin on Monday, 4 June if the reductions went into effect as scheduled. UTWA Local 1878 at the Dwight Manufacturing Company prepared to participate in the walkout. Noting that the union "voted to back up McMahon 100 per cent," James Holland, president of the local, held out hope "that a satisfactory settlement could be reached" before a strike began. The mounting tensions were, in fact, momentarily diffused when Hugh Johnson negotiated an agreement between UTWA president Thomas McMahon, Cotton Textile National Industrial Relations Board chairman Robert Bruere, and Code Authority chairman George Sloan. Under the terms of the settlement, the UTWA

would not go forward with the general strike, the Bruere Board would add a union representative to its membership, and investigations would be made to judge the necessity of production cuts and to determine the feasibility of increasing wages.[37]

The production curtailment went forward on 1 June and as events soon showed, the UTWA remained, at best, a junior partner in the administration of the Cotton Textile Code. At worst, the organization was a supplicant to the mill owners who dominated it. Thomas McMahon's settlement with Johnson, Bruere, and Sloan did nothing to alleviate the distress of millhands throughout the country. In addition to the de facto 25 percent weekly wage reduction caused by the production cut, management continued the stretch-outs, job reclassifications, layoffs, and discrimination against union members. The UTWA rank and file, therefore, took matters into their own hands. During the spring and summer of 1934, textile workers in mills throughout the Piedmont South engaged in unauthorized strikes against recalcitrant owners and management, with eight walkouts in May, five in June, and nine in July.[38]

In Alabama, union members in several mills went on strike during the first week of July. Within days of the walkouts, all of Alabama's UTWA locals met to discuss whether or not to declare a statewide general strike and to take an informal strike vote. "[A]pproximately 30,000 textile workers in Alabama mills have voted to strike," the *Gadsden Times* reported on 10 July 1934, adding that "a meeting will be held in Birmingham Sunday to vote on a strike." The Alabama locals demanded payment of the twelve-dollar minimum wage for a thirty-hour week, abolition of the stretch-out, reemployment for workers who had lost jobs because of their union affiliations, and recognition of the UTWA as the chosen bargaining agent for the workers. Although Thomas McMahon urged the Alabama locals to be patient, the statewide general strike vote went forward. By mid-July, millhands in Gadsden, Huntsville, Florence, Anniston, Cordova, Jasper, Guntersville, Albertville, and Birmingham were on strike.[39]

The spark for the July 1934 walkout at the Dwight Manufacturing Company was the firing of union members. "Fifteen hundred employees of the Dwight Cotton Mills here walked out on strike this morning," the local press reported on 12 July. "James Holland, president of the local, said that the employes [*sic*] were discharged yesterday because they voted last week to join in the general textile strike in Alabama." The union vowed to stay out of the mill until management met all the demands made at the time of the general strike vote. Although the firing of five Dwight unionists instigated the walkout, members of the local also struck to protest the stretch-out, union discrimination, job reclassifications, wage cuts, and the blind eye turned toward their needs by Thomas McMahon and members of the Cotton Textile Code bureaucracy.[40]

When the strike began, Dwight agent Allan Little denied all charges of discrimination and code chiseling leveled by the union. "We are operating under the code of the National Recovery Act," Little stated, "and expect to continue to do so." He also feigned ignorance of the workers' accumulated grievances, contending that the Dwight local had not presented him directly with any formal list of complaints against the company or individual supervisors. The striking Dwight workers immediately began picketing at all entrances to the mill, "preventing any shipment of goods or freight of any sort . . . to enter the yards," and were adamant about seeing that "nobody goes into the plant." In response, Little announced he would not bargain in any way with the union. Little countered the workers' action in classic Dwight fashion, posting signs at the mill gates stating, "This mill will be closed indefinitely," and instituting a lockout.[41]

By late July 1934, the walkout of Alabama's textile workers and threats by North Carolina's UTWA locals to begin a statewide strike of their own forced the national leadership of the UTWA to assume a more aggressive posture toward the Cotton Textile Code Authority. UTWA president Thomas McMahon announced that the union's national convention, originally scheduled to take place in late September, would be moved to August so that the delegates could discuss the pressing issues of the Alabama strike and the possibility of calling a nationwide general strike. McMahon, while appearing to speak in a more militant tone, was also very careful to distance himself from the millhands already on strike in Alabama whose actions were characterized by Scott Roberts, president of the Alabama Cotton Textile Association, as a "strike against the NRA." McMahon found himself walking a fine line between placating restless southern operatives and not undermining the union's tenuous position within the Cotton Textile Code bureaucracy, publicly stating that the Alabama operatives were showing "an utter disregard for the principles of the NRA," but that unless employers "show some inclination to cooperate with labor" the "United Textile Workers special convention . . . will vote in favor of the strike."[42]

At the August special convention of the UTWA, in front of more than five hundred delegates, southern unionists articulated their grievances over the stretch-out, miserable working conditions, and the flouting of the Cotton Textile Code by mill owners throughout the region. James Holland, president of the Dwight UTWA local, ardently argued for a general strike vote. If wages were not raised, he told the delegates, "thousands of textile workers would be starved to death," and "whole families had been discharged from mills for no other reason than that they belonged to the union." A. W. Cox of Huntsville, Alabama, recounted how he had been "shot at and blackjacked by employers' henchmen" because of his affiliation with the UTWA. Swayed by southerners' impassioned pleas, unionists from mills in the Northeast agreed to support their southern

counterparts. After the introduction of over fifty resolutions calling for a general strike, the UTWA passed a general strike motion, authorized for all branches of the industry, with only ten dissenting votes. The UTWA convention delegates issued the same set of demands made in July by the Alabama locals and named Vice President Francis Gorman as director of the nationwide general strike set to begin on 1 September 1934.[43]

On Monday, 3 September 1934, UTWA members initiated strikes in textile mills throughout the South. Dwight workers marched through the streets of Gadsden as part of a contingent of wage earners nearly five thousand strong, the largest Labor Day parade in the city's history. "Dwight workers stretched for two blocks," the *Gadsden Times* reported, in a procession that included members of the Allied Printing Trades Union, Teamsters, United Rubber Workers, and unions representing carpenters, plumbers, butchers, sign painters, paper hangers, retail clerks, and molders. Support for the General Strike gained momentum over the next several days. Unionists in the textile centers of the Northeast, after the Labor Day holiday on 3 September, commenced walkouts on 4 September. These unionists were protesting, in the first display of nationwide solidarity of its kind in the UTWA's history, not only grievances of their own, but also those of mill workers in the South whose plight was measurably worse.[44] Over the next three weeks, "flying squadrons" of UTWA members traveled in cars and trucks to help start strikes in unorganized, isolated textile mills throughout the Piedmont South, and operatives went on strike in every major textile town in New England. At its peak, the general strike involved as many as four hundred thousand millhands.

However, the 1934 General Textile Strike, despite its widespread reach, was in reality not the coordinated nationwide or even region-wide "great uprising" described by UTWA boosters then or numerous historians since. As aptly described by South Carolina textile historian G. C. Waldrep III, the 1934 General Strike was actually "a crazy-quilt of disparate activity." Textile workers throughout the United States found commonality in their support for the New Deal and in their opposition to the stretch-out and code chiselers, but the 1934 strike was a polyglot of individual labor disputes being fought out largely at the local level. The strike varied from location to location and ranged from peaceful to violent. Many mill managers, like Agent Allan Little at the Dwight Manufacturing Company, simply closed their factories to wait out the strikers. Other manufacturers, in response to the flying squadrons and tensions between union and nonunion workers hired to replace them, employed armed guards and, with the support of governors in their states, called on the National Guard to protect mill properties, prevent additional walkouts, and safeguard strikebreakers who crossed the picket lines. In numerous northern and southern locales, violent clashes

occurred between strikers, scabs, local sheriffs, guardsmen, and private police forces, with the most serious bloodshed of the strike occurring in Honea Path, South Carolina; Trion, Georgia; and Saylesville, Rhode Island.[45]

The strike at the Dwight Manufacturing Company was peaceful and passed with fewer confrontations between workers and management as well as between prounion workers and antiunion workers than in other southern locales. Although the governors of Georgia and North and South Carolina deployed National Guard units in their states, Alabama governor Benjamin Miller refused a request made by the sheriff of Etowah County on 13 July 1934 to send the National Guard to Gadsden to break the strike at the Dwight Company, and he did not authorize the use of state troops at any point during the General Strike. "[L]ots of time in a strike like that . . . these company men would come out and jump on you. But they didn't say a word to us," Dwight striker Grady Kilgro remembered. "They just let us have our picket and that was it. Sometimes the bosses would come out by and speak to you and sometimes they'd just look like they could bit your head off, and that was about the situation of it." Local 1878 pickets covered every entrance at the mill, day and night, for the duration of the strike. "[T]hey was some that tried to force their way into the plant to go in and work some jobs. And, of course, these people were not union people," recalled Melton Ballard. But he added, "[T]hey never did make it into the plant. They were stopped at the gate." Although the strikers, according to Burns Cox, "had men with baseball bats [and] sticks . . . Everybody was happy on the picket line, even though we was getting' nothin', no nourishment or nothin' like that." The local press reported at the beginning of the walkout that "leaders are endeavoring to keep order," a tone maintained throughout the strike. The overt violence experienced in other textile towns between striking and nonstriking workers did not materialize in Alabama City.[46]

Although Burns Cox was proud that "nobody went in" at the Dwight mills for the duration of the General Strike, production continued in many mills from North to South. In Alabama, of eighty-three mills, only thirty-one mills employing about one-third of the state's operatives participated in the strike. Management control remained tight in the nonstriking towns, and only one Alabama mill joined the walkout after the UTWA approved the national strike. Over half of the textile mills nationwide continued operating throughout the strike. With the UTWA critically short of funds and unable to completely shut down the industry nationwide, the strike began to fail within three weeks of its start. AFL president William Green's support of the strike had been lukewarm from the beginning. Not wanting to sour his relationship with Roosevelt administration officials and feeling that the strike was ill timed given the economic conditions that prevailed throughout the country, he rejected

the UTWA's request for AFL funds to support the strike even before it began. Without the AFL's financial backing, the UTWA quickly realized that it was unable on its own to raise the money and furnish relief supplies needed to sustain the hundreds of thousands of millhands on strike. Operatives throughout the industry, especially those in Alabama who had been out of work for over six weeks, were being driven back to work by "force and hunger" according to UTWA spokesmen. Public opinion, likewise, was largely against the strikers. The Cotton Textile Code Authority and individual manufacturers continued to publicly characterize the strike as a violation of the agreement made between the UTWA and NRA officials. In their telling, the strike was not a protest against unyielding, union-hostile employers but against the NRA and against the law.[47]

With the likelihood of mill managers accepting the demands of the UTWA diminishing with each passing day, strike leader Francis Gorman worked behind the scenes to secure a quick settlement of the conflict. Within days of the start of the strike, President Roosevelt appointed a special board to investigate the causes of the walkout, naming John Winant, a former governor of New Hampshire, to chair the inquiry. The Winant Board, as it came to be called, issued its report on 21 September 1934. The Winant Report's recommendations called for abolishing the Bruere Board, creating a new board to hear workers' grievances, and for inquiries into the stretch-out and the possibility of raising wages. The board's members suggested that President Roosevelt ask workers to end the strike based on their proposals, and to personally call on mill owners to resume operations without discrimination against the strikers. When Roosevelt made this request, Gorman had the "out" he had been looking for and, declaring the strike a success, officially called off the walkout on 22 September. "We have now gained every substantial thing that we can gain in this strike," Gorman announced. "Our strike has torn apart the whole unjust structure of the NRA, lifting a load from all labor as well as from ourselves."[48]

The reality was that the UTWA had suffered a terrible defeat, and the rank and file knew it. In fact, textile mill owners were in no way compelled to honor the recommendations of the Winant Board and blatantly ignored President Roosevelt's request that they refrain from taking punitive measures against the strikers. Nowhere was this loss more palpable than at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill. The path the conflict followed in Alabama City paralleled the strikes there in 1921 and 1922, as well as strikes occurring as early as the 1870s at the company's closed Chicopee mill. After the Dwight local struck, management simply closed the mill and instituted a lockout, threatening the workers with the possibility of being fired and evicted from their homes, until the majority of the strikers yielded. New, nonunion employees replaced those who did not abandon the union. After Gorman's victory announcement Grady

Kilgro remembered, "People got the paper and read it and laughed about it. They said, 'Where's our victory? We didn't git what we wanted. We didn't git what we asked fer. The company got theirs and we right back in the same old rut we 'as in.' "[49]

After Gorman announced the official end of the General Strike, the leaders of the Dwight local initially voted to continue theirs, insisting that "the employers first guarantee unconditionally, the reinstatement, without discrimination of all who quit the mills." Seeming to bow to the local's demand, Dwight management announced on 23 September that the Alabama City mill would reopen. The following day, however, it took aggressive steps to break the union. The 1934 Dwight strike officially collapsed on 24 September when the company secured injunctions against sixty strikers, "enjoining them from interfering in any way with the operation" of the mill. The local sheriff served the first injunctions to twenty-four Dwight employees who were the officials of the UTWA local, their family members, and their most fervent supporters.[50]

Before reopening the mill, the company attempted to weed out as many union supporters from its workforce that it could. "[W]e were notified that the personnel office would be open and ever single person that worked in that mill had to go through the unemployment office," Burns Cox remembered. " . . . They looked at you and they knowed you. They knew who they wanted and who they didn't want. . . . Some of 'em they just told them flat-footed, 'You're blackballed. Get on out!' " Others, Dwight employee Laura Beard added, "had to sign a paper that they would never mention the union again." Dwight management also easily found nonunion replacements for ousted workers from a pool of surplus labor made up of unemployed industrial workers and small farmers in the immediate Gadsden area. When the Dwight Company began production again, the local press observed that the millhands "simply stepped back into normal habits as if nothing had ever happened," but harassment of the former union members, nonetheless, continued. "They come around and talked to you after you were in there, wantin' to know why that you wanted a union. And ask, 'Do you think you're bein' treated right?' " Grady Kilgro recalled. "Well, you 'as a-workin'. You have to say yes or no, one, and most of 'em said yes because that's all they could do."[51]

In all, Dwight management fired 115 strikers who refused to renounce their membership in the union. "[T]he worst thing that they ever did, the worst thing I think anyone could ever do . . . they laid off the ones that didn't sign the paper," Laura Beard said of the poststrike situation. " . . . [T]he ones that was in the plant houses they threw 'em on the sidewalk, clothes and all. . . . You could go up and down that street there in that cotton-mill village and all over town you find people on the sidewalks, on the streets, and under shelters

because they had no place to go and no job." The UTWA filed charges of discrimination and harassment with the Textile Labor Relations Board, established in the wake of the strike to hear and settle code disputes, on behalf of the ousted Dwight UTWA members. The board convened local hearings to investigate the union's claims in November 1934. "It is understood that the company will claim that it did not reemploy some operatives because there are no jobs for them," the *Gadsden Times* noted, "and that it will employ most if not all of them when conditions warrant." Though the ousted workers all testified that they were pickets during the strike and that mill supervisors told most of them that "they would be sent for when they were wanted," the board sided with Dwight management and none of them were reinstated.[52]

The aftermath of the General Strike in textile towns throughout the country, in varying degrees of severity, mirrored what happened in Alabama City. Northern and southern manufacturers called for a greater "solidarity of purpose on the part of cotton manufacturers" to prevent another strike from happening. Members of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers created a "Platform of Principles of Industrial Relations," in which mill owners agreed that they would take all necessary steps to see that "the duty of management to conduct business for which it is responsible" would not be "obstructed by forcing a surrender of its proper functions to the government or to employee organizations." David Clark, likewise, urged readers of the *Southern Textile Bulletin* to "entirely ignore the so-called 'impartial investigators' of the Textile Labor Relations Board," reminding them that "the only penalty for the application of boots to the seat of pants is through a local indictment and possibly a small fine."[53]

Working conditions continued to erode as old patterns of code evasions resurfaced. "Well, they just come back in there and they just made it rough on us," Grady Kilgro recollected of the strike's aftermath, "just like you're out there drivin' a bunch of cattle and that was it." As of January 1935, the Textile Labor Relations Board had received from strikers more than 1,600 discrimination complaints against 579 mills. But Thomas McMahon lamented over a year later that "thousands are still unemployed" because of the 1934 strike. By April 1937, the UTWA's nationwide membership had dwindled to fewer than 38,000, with fewer than 5,500 paid-up members in Alabama, Georgia, and North and South Carolina.[54] Mill owners' retaliations against workers who participated in the strike, their open hostility toward taking any action on the Winant Board proposals, and their flouting of the Cotton Textile Code's stipulations protecting workers' rights to organize made the end of the strike a bitter pill to swallow for millhands who had trusted both their union and the federal government to see that the conflict ended in their favor. "I 'magine his intentions were good, but

he didn't live up to what he said he's goin' to do," Dwight employee Clyde Ware said of President Roosevelt. "What he should have done was got an injunction against Dwight Manufacturin' Company to put everbody back to work like they was when they come out on strike."[55]

No fundamental alteration of the low-wage, nonunion, management-dominated status quo occurred in the southern textile industry as a result of the Cotton Textile Code or the 1934 General Textile Strike. New England mill closures and removals to the Piedmont South continued apace through the remainder of the decade. Within the context of the ongoing regional relocation of the U.S. textile industry, the 1934 strike would in many ways prove itself remarkably unremarkable. Yet attempts to organize southern textile mills and equalize North-South wage differentials did not completely end with the 1934 strike debacle or with the Supreme Court's ruling in May 1935 that the NIRA, including Section 7(a), was unconstitutional. The Dwight Manufacturing Company would take center stage in these efforts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"We Kept Right on Organizin' "

From Defeat to Victory and Back Again

"We have won many singular and important victories," the Textile Workers Union of America's Committee on Organization reported to delegates at the union's fourth biennial convention in 1943. "Most significant are our victories at the Harriet Mills and the Dwight Manufacturing Company. . . . The southern worker knows us for our achievements and for our determination to provide effective union administration. We can now really initiate an extensive organization campaign in the south."[1] In the wake of the 1934 General Textile Strike debacle, textile unionization revived under the banner of the Congress of Industrial Organizations' Textile Workers Union of America (CIO-TWUA). The TWUA was arguably at its strongest when, in the midst of World War II, the union proudly counted among its unionized textile mills the seemingly impenetrable antiunion bastion that was the Dwight Manufacturing Company in Gadsden, Alabama. Although the TWUA celebrated hard-fought victories like the one at Dwight, the union quickly discovered at war's end that the organizing momentum generated during the late 1930s and through World War II would not be easily maintained. By the 1950s, the TWUA would find itself in the familiar position of rapidly losing its membership base in New England as mill closures throughout the region accelerated, and in the South, assuming a defensive posture to protect the gains it had been able to make there. In the face of increased competition from low-wage, nonunion areas throughout the world, southern cotton textile workers too began to face the specter of local mill closures that had shaped labor-management relations in the New England textile industry since the turn of the century. In 1959, the Dwight Manufacturing Company, hailed as one of the TWUA's greatest success stories, became one of the first southern casualties of the post–World War II globalized textile industry.

The 1934 textile strike left many mill operatives throughout the South disenchanted. By 1937, from a prestrike peak of over 300,000, membership in the United Textile Workers of America dwindled to under 38,000 nationwide, with southern members numbering slightly under 5,500. But as the decade pro-

gressed, a hint of optimism returned. Textile unionists began abandoning the largely defunct AFL-affiliated United Textile Workers of America for membership within the CIO's Textile Workers Union of America. Between 1936 and 1937, CIO unionists organized the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee (TWOC), the forerunner to the TWUA, and they developed plans for a CIO-led southern organizing campaign. Unlike UTWA campaigns of the past, the TWOC drive that began in April 1937 had ample financial resources. Textile unionists hoped that they could capitalize on the momentum created and monetary war chest provided by the CIO's successes in organizing mass industries like steel, autos, rubber, and electrical goods to finally make headway in the South's largest and most union-hostile industry. Expectations were high that the moment for the creation of a truly effectual nationwide organization of textile workers had finally arrived.[2]

The passage of federal labor legislation likewise bolstered the TWOC's optimism. After the Supreme Court ruling in May 1935 that declared the National Industrial Recovery Act and its prolabor Section 7(a) unconstitutional, Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act in July. Commonly called the Wagner Act after Senator Robert Wagner, one of its crafters and most ardent supporters, this new legislation made the federal government, working through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a mediator in the dealings between management and organized labor in industries throughout the United States. TWOC officials anticipated that southern textile workers would willingly join the union now that the federal government, working through the NLRB, presumably stood at the ready to stop management from engaging in unfair labor practices, to bring an end to discrimination against unions, and to help sustain collective bargaining efforts. According to labor historian Melvyn Dubofsky, the Wagner Act "gave the labor movement a charter for action."[3]

Despite these factors, the 1937–38 TWOC organizing drive had limited success. The union expressed its goals for the campaign in national terms, focusing much of its attention on the North-South wage differential and on stabilizing production throughout the industry through union-enforced hours standards. From the start, however, the campaign took on a sectional character. The CIO initially headquartered the TWOC drive in New York City, and of the over six hundred organizers hired, the union assigned nearly 75 percent of them to the North and spread the remaining 25 percent throughout the entire upper and lower South. Reminiscent of the "North first" strategy generally embraced by the UTWA in its late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century organizing drives, the CIO poured much of its resources into the region where the organization had the highest potential for success. TWOC organizing efforts in northern mills did bring significant membership gains there as mill owners acquiesced

to the presence of NLRB-certified union locals in their mills and abided by the collective bargaining provisions of the Wagner Act.[4]

In the South, however, TWOC organizers found themselves fighting a decidedly uphill battle. The campaign began during the 1937 Roosevelt Recession. Throughout 1938 organizers struggled with the resulting wage reductions, layoffs, and production cuts, as well as the cuts in staff and funding that the economic downturn forced the CIO to make. The complexities of the textile industry further hampered TWOC efforts. The union faced the challenge of organizing mills nationwide that made goods ranging from cotton goods, silk, and synthetic materials to woolens, hosiery, and carpets. This complex industry was still comprised overwhelmingly of small, geographically dispersed mills. Unlike in the steel or auto industry, the textile industry had no single bellwether plant that could potentially establish bargaining standards for the others. The CIO, moreover, had only marginal success with publicity campaigns meant to convince southern textile workers, who were still disillusioned from the outcome of the 1934 General Strike, that the TWOC, with the backing of the then-strongest industrial union in the nation, was a fundamentally different organization than the UTWA. Having learned their lessons from the union purges that followed the 1934 strike, many southern textile workers remained skeptical of the TWOC. Although the TWOC attempted to draw in new members by not charging them dues until a contract was in place, few were willing to risk their livelihoods by openly joining an unproven organization. Southern mill owners only bolstered this tendency of southern millhands to "wait and see" by openly defying the Wagner Act and fighting against unionization tooth and nail.[5]

This attitude was true of the millhands at the Dwight Manufacturing Company, where UTWA Local 1878, which organized before the 1934 strike, continued efforts to sustain a viable independent textile union in the Gadsden mill. "After we come off the strike in '34, our old union people did not disband," Dwight employee Burns Cox recalled. "We took what we could hold together and we kept 'em together. We didn't come open, but we held meetings and stuff like that." In fact, the UTWA did manage to maintain a semblance of organizational strength in Alabama after the General Strike, and the state's textile workers comprised nearly 70 percent of the union's total membership in the South's four leading textile states.[6]

Dwight management, in addition to its policies of firing, blacklisting, and evicting from company housing those who continued to openly support Local 1878, created and funded the Dwight Employees Association (DEA) during the fall of 1934 and "encouraged" membership in the organization as part of employment with the company. The bylaws of the organization stated the DEA's purpose as maintaining "close and friendly relations with the employer of the

Members of the Dwight Employees Association meeting on 4 January 1936. (Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland)

association," and working "generally to carry on and perform the functions of a labor association or union." Through the DEA, management of the Dwight mill sought to keep an independent union out by giving workers a company-controlled, institutional outlet for their grievances. The company provided a place for the association to meet and also allowed solicitation of members and dues collection in the mill during working hours. The organization's Employer's Relations Committee, usually made up of department managers and second hands, had the duties of maintaining "friendly relations with their employer" and representing "the association and its members in all matters requiring conferences with such employer." Simply put, in the words of Dwight employee Burns Cox, the "Dwight Employees Association was a company organization, formed by the company, run by the company."[7]

On 4 November 1935, Dwight Local 1878 filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board requesting "an investigation and certification of representatives," claiming that the UTWA, not the Dwight Employees Association, actually represented the majority of the production employees at the Dwight mill. In his preliminary assessment of the situation at the Dwight Manufacturing Company, NLRB regional director Charles Feidelson reported that "I think the whole picture can be shown with sufficient clarity to justify the Board in holding an election," citing management's "hostile attitude to the union," the firing of UTWA members even after the passage of the Wagner Act in July, the expectation of DEA membership as a facet of employment, and the "conferring [of] various favors on the company union." Although Dwight's general manager,

Thomas Cousins, denied pressuring employees to join the DEA and claimed that it took a "neutral" position when dealing with "rival" labor organizations, Feidelson held firm in his opinion. "[T]here can probably be proved a fairly good case," he concluded, "that the company has by intimidation and coercion prevented the free choice of representatives among the employees and instilled such a fear as even to prevent them from openly requesting an election."[8]

Within ten days of when the Dwight UTWA local filed its complaint with the NLRB, the board ordered hearings to be held in Gadsden to determine if a certification election should indeed take place. Hearings held during the first week of January 1936 featured Dwight agent Allan Little and a parade of employees who testified that the Dwight Employees Association was an independently functioning union. During the hearings, Allan Little said that the only UTWA members fired in the wake of the 1934 strike were those who had been "guilty of violence" during the lockout, and the union had only minority support, if any, among current employees. To back his statements, Little presented into evidence a petition signed by nearly two thousand Dwight employees "stating that they wished the Association to represent them in dealings with the Company, that they did not wish Local No. 1878 to represent them, and that they did not wish an election."[9]

Nevertheless, the January 1936 hearings revealed that the UTWA union was in fact alive and well at the Dwight Manufacturing Company. "At the time of the hearing, Local No. 1878 was not functioning openly among the employees then working in the mill but carried on all its activities with respect to such employees in secret," Charles Bergman of the NLRB reported to the regional office in Atlanta. "It still carried approximately 1,300 employees on its books as members in good standing." Ultimately, the NLRB concluded that pro-DEA testimony presented at the Gadsden hearings was hopelessly tainted by threats of "discharge or other discrimination." The company too, the NLRB investigation found, programmatically enlisted the help of production workers and supervisors to spy on gatherings of Dwight employees thought to be talking union at the mill and in the company village. On 9 March 1936, the board issued an order that a certification election be held at the Dwight Manufacturing Company.[10]

Before the January 1936 Gadsden hearings on the Dwight case began, Thomas Emerson of the NLRB General Counsel's Office wrote to his colleague Charles Fahy that "I am sure that this case is going to be very hard fought and we may get into the courts about it." Emerson's words proved prophetic. After the hearings, the NLRB requested that the Dwight Manufacturing Company turn over its payroll records so that the board could take an accurate count of Dwight employees in preparation for the certification election. The board planned to schedule the ballot no more than ten days after but the company refused to abide

by a subpoena issued on 14 March 1936 for the records. In a deposition taken in preparation for a just-cause hearing in U.S. District Court, Allan Little maintained the company's contention that the certification election was unnecessary because Dwight employees initiated the organization of the Dwight Employees Association out of "feelings of friendship" with the management and that subsequent members joined voluntarily. Making an argument meant to undermine support for the UTWA local, Little asserted that collective bargaining with any other union would surely increase "the labor costs of the Company to a point at which it will be threatened with and will sustain a new cash operating loss as a result thereof, the mill will be closed, thereby depriving the Company of its property and the employees of their employment and of their means of livelihood."[11]

The Dwight Manufacturing Company made it clear that it had no intention of complying with any NLRB-issued order. The focus of the just-cause hearing convened in Birmingham on 29 April 1936 was the constitutionality of the Wagner Act and the NLRB's jurisdiction over the Dwight Company's labor-management relations. "The said Act is in purpose, in essence and on its face an attempt to regulate matters not committed to the Federal Government by the Constitution," the Dwight Company contended, "by regulating industry, including the relations between employer and employe [*sic*] in respect to rates of pay, hours of employment and other conditions of employment." The company argued that the board had no jurisdiction over Dwight because it was not engaged in interstate commerce but rather "solely in the operation of an industry wholly within the State of Alabama" wherein workers spun cotton purchased from Alabama farmers into cotton goods sold and delivered to consumers living within the state's borders. If the court forced the company to turn over its payroll records, Dwight's counsel asserted, it would be overstepping its jurisdictional authority and thereby allowing "unreasonable searches and seizures."[12]

The NLRB anticipated the Dwight constitutionality challenge early in the case. To refute the contention that the Dwight Manufacturing Company was engaged only in intrastate commerce, representatives of the board presented evidence that between 15 and 17 percent of raw cotton purchased by the company came from outside of Alabama and that additional materials used in preparing the company's textile goods for market included starches purchased from a supplier in Illinois, burlap sacks purchased from overseas suppliers, and machines and machine parts originating in Massachusetts shops. Not only did the board find that the company sold 90 percent of its goods outside of Alabama, it found that up to 7 percent of Dwight's sales were to consumers in foreign countries.[13]

1936 proved to be a year of labor unrest in Gadsden and threatened to tarnish the city's carefully polished image as a conservative, peaceful, business-

friendly town. While the Dwight Manufacturing Company was embroiled in an exhaustive NLRB investigation and related court hearings, the United Rubber Workers (URW) were engaged in an intensely fought organizing campaign at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company's Gadsden plant. The fight between labor and management at Dwight was largely played out in the courts and on the pages of the local newspapers. The URW campaign, however, was marked by violence perpetrated against organizers and union sympathizers by hostile townspeople and the local authorities. Civic leaders, nonetheless, saw both attempts at establishing labor unions in the Gadsden industries as destabilizing and potentially disastrous for the city's ability to attract business investments. In an attempt to downplay the labor strife engulfing Gadsden, the city commission passed a proclamation making the week of 27 April 1936, the same week that arguments began in the NLRB case against the Dwight Company, "Appreciation Week" for the city's businesses and industries. "The commission calls upon the people to show in some public manner," the *Gadsden Times* announced, "their appreciation of the various manufacturing plants in the Gadsden area, their payrolls, large and small, and the fine type of men who are employed in them."[14]

Meant to bolster the confidence of management at Dwight and Goodyear and to rally the support of the local citizenry, Appreciation Week amounted to a city-supported public relations campaign. "The industries of Gadsden kept the city going during the worst of the depression," the *Gadsden Times* lauded. "[T]hey have been such a mainstay in a time of trouble," the paper asserted, "that the people of Gadsden want to voice their appreciation in a public manner." In August, Dwight management, speaking through the mouthpiece of the Dwight Employees Association, showed its appreciation for the support of the city, press, and many local citizens. In a statement signed by the executive officers of the DEA and published in the *Gadsden Times*, the company declared that labor-management relations at Dwight "are not only harmonious but are friendly." Emphasizing the $300,000 expansion underway at the mill, the statement continued, "The Dwight Employees have a very bright outlook, and we wish to assure . . . the citizens of the community that we intend to preserve these peaceful and prosperous conditions despite the efforts of selfish interests who are now trying to destroy them."[15]

Dwight management held true to its word. The company continued to pummel the NLRB with hearing after hearing and appeal after appeal over the issue of subpoenaed documents and with petitions for injunctions against further NLRB-related proceedings. The Supreme Court declared the Wagner Act constitutional on 12 April 1937, but the company did not relent. Three months later, *The Nation* published an article by Maxwell Stewart asserting that "Gadsden may lay claim as being the toughest [antiunion] city in the United States,"

where "the reign of terror which has been maintained in the employers' interest in this small Southern town has not been spontaneous or sporadic. It has been well organized, coolly carried out, and incomparably efficient—so effective, according to local newspapermen, that it probably cannot be overcome." Stewart's observations were, in the near term, proven at the Dwight Manufacturing Company. During the summer of 1937, the Textile Workers Organizing Committee assumed jurisdiction over the Dwight UTWA local. The TWOC vowed to continue the union's fight for recognition and collective bargaining rights at the Dwight mill but made no headway with what proved to be a long, demoralizing, and financially draining battle in the courts. As the case dragged on, management's union-busting activities continued inside the mill and throughout the company village. The local's leaders found they were losing rank-and-file support, so much so that in September 1939, the Textile Workers Union of America, which had been formed by a merger of the TWOC and functioning independent UTWA locals in May of 1939, formally withdrew the petition that had been filed by the Dwight UTWA local nearly four years earlier requesting an NLRB certification election.[16]

At the first convention of the Textile Workers Union of America, delegates passed a resolution making "as its Number One task the completion of the job . . . of organizing the textile workers of the South, with the expectation of reporting to the 1941 Convention the full realization of this fundamental objective." At the time of the convention, TWUA president Emil Rieve claimed a membership of 424,000 textile workers nationwide, though because of the union's no-contract, no-pay policy, actual dues-paying members were only a fraction of that number. The union continued to organize but fell far short of its 1939 objective to have completed the task of southern organizing by the 1941 convention. The TWUA's membership base was squarely in the North. A month after the union's April 1941 convention, the TWUA had won bargaining rights for only 17,000 workers in twenty-three southern mills out of the over 400,000 textile operatives in the region. The unionized mills in the South remained islands in the vast sea of those that remained unorganized.[17]

As the nation entered World War II, the TWUA looked to solidify and extend the marginal gains it had made in the South. Unlike industries in the North, many of which saw their organizing heyday during the sit-down strikes of 1936–37, wartime organizing drives would prove to be particularly important in southern industries. With the onset of war, the government began granting contracts throughout the South, which forced employers to forgo much of their traditional hostility toward unions in the name of receiving federal funds and a share of wartime profits. Following a series of strikes through the winter and spring of 1941 that involved nearly 2.5 million workers, in January 1942 President

Franklin Roosevelt created the National War Labor Board (NWLB) by executive order to mediate and settle potentially disruptive disagreements between workers and companies with government contracts. Because of the combination of the labor-friendly attitude of the government and the desire of employers both North and South to meet production quotas and keep government contracts flowing their way, it appeared that organized labor's power was on the rise.[18]

The National War Labor Board was a crucial ally to organizing drives in mills throughout the textile South. According to labor historian Nelson Lichtenstein, the board created a climate in which southern industrial workers could "liberate themselves from three generations of paternalism and repression." The NWLB's support of the TWUA's unionization efforts, however, was contingent on the union abiding by a no-strike pledge. In recognition of the fact that the no-strike pledge removed an important weapon from the union's arsenal in battles against antagonistic employers, the board backed the TWUA's call for maintenance-of-membership clauses in their contracts. Most maintenance-of-membership clauses included a fifteen-day "escape period" during which time a new union member could rescind his or her membership and then required that union members remain in good standing and abide by the union's regulations through the duration of a negotiated contract. Dues check-off provisions aided in the regular collection of dues by requiring companies to deduct them directly from members' paychecks and send them to the union. The maintenance provisions protected the union against defections of disgruntled rank and file who might want to strike over shop-floor issues but, because of the no-strike pledge, would not be permitted to do so by the national union. Maintenance-of-membership as well as the dues check-off provisions, moreover, meant that the TWUA had insurance against postwar union busting like that which ravaged textile unionism's gains in the South following World War I.[19]

Even with the support of the National War Labor Board, the TWUA's wartime gains in individual mills throughout the South often came only after hard-fought, years-long campaigns. Nowhere was this more true than at the Dwight Manufacturing Company. There, the core of unionists that remained following the failed attempt to win bargaining rights during the late 1930s renewed their efforts during the war to force management to recognize and bargain with an independent, TWUA-affiliated union. The TWUA began anew its organizing attempts at the mill during early 1941. By the spring of 1942, Dwight management took the position that because the Dwight Employees Association was the "union" chosen by the majority of employees in the mill, it therefore was the only organization with which management was legally bound to negotiate. When the DEA held a vote in June 1942 to elect a new president of the committee

that conveyed shop-floor grievances to management, millhands who supported the TWUA staged an attempted takeover of the organization in order to transform it from the inside into a legitimate union. Oscar LaFollette, with the support of workers who were members of or sympathetic to the TWUA agenda, ran against management-backed Charles Henderson, a fixer in the spinning room. LaFollette not only lost the election, but Henderson received a promotion shortly thereafter, making him a supervisor with the "right to direct employees and to recommend discharges."[20]

In spite of the failed coup, "We kept right on organizin'," Dwight employee Laura Beard remembered. "We went and got a new organizer and went right on." Acting on a request from the Dwight unionists, in July 1942 the TWUA stepped up its organizing efforts at the Gadsden mill. Within two weeks, the union had received signed pledge cards from over four hundred Dwight employees. Sign-ups continued as organizers distributed handbills at the mill gates at each shift change, employees who had become members solicited others to join during their shifts, and union members held "frequent mass meetings near the mill."[21] As was the case after the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, employees' confidence that the government backed their efforts bolstered the prounion employees at Dwight during the World War II organizing campaign. "When I first started up, there wasn't but seven of 'em was would wear a [CIO] badge at the mill at night. . . . [I] wore a little 'ol cap with the bill turned up and I put mine right up there," card-room employee Hilburn Garrett remembered. "When my job started, right in the big alley . . . all the bosses and superintendent would be at the change of every shift, and they saw me with that badge," he continued. "[Superintendent] Moody jumped about three-foot high and wanted Mr. Turner to come over there and run me off. . . . Mr. Turner said, 'Now listen,' says, 'you know the government gives the people a right to join a union, if they want to'. . . . He didn't have the guts to do it. That's the way we got by with it."[22]

Such overt shows of support for the TWUA, nevertheless, were still fraught with perils. Within a month of when the organizing drive began, Dwight management, alternately citing the company's policy against "participation in any activity other than Company business . . . on the plant premises without written permission," and "slack time," fired three employees active in shop-floor organizing and a fourth two weeks later. The discharge of the employees, however, became a rallying point in the union campaign. Within six months of the start of the TWUA drive at Dwight, fired organizer I. H. Atkins wrote to NLRB chairman Harry A. Millis, "We have the majority of workers signed up in the union and we are wanting an election and the workers in this mill are getting tired of waiting and are talking about going on strike." Three days later, on 12

January 1943, the TWUA officially filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board against the Dwight Manufacturing Company, alleging that the company knowingly engaged in unfair labor practices.[23]

When Dwight employees testified at hearings convened in Gadsden in February and March 1943, they echoed charges of intimidation and threats of firing made against union sympathizers that had been leveled during the NLRB hearings convened in 1936. In the end, the linchpin of the TWUA's case was proving that the company fired the four organizers in 1942 for no other reason than their union activities. Employee testimony revealed that Dwight workers regularly sold raffle tickets on company property, an "activity other than Company business," without explicit written permission from management. With this evidence in hand, in April 1943 the board ordered that a certification election be held at the Dwight mill.[24]

Until the election could take place, the NLRB ordered the Dwight Company to cease and desist "from interfering, restraining or coercing in any manner its employees in the exercise of their right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations" as well as "from dominating and interfering with the formation and administration of, or contributing financial or other support to the Dwight Employees Association as a 'labor organization'." The board further mandated that the company "withdraw and withhold all recognition" of the DEA as the bargaining agent for workers with grievances over pay, wages, hours "or other conditions of employment." Likewise, the NLRB directed the company to reinstate the four workers fired for their organizing activities, to amend the constitution of the Dwight Employees Association removing the clause barring members from joining any other labor organization or union, and to post in conspicuous places throughout the mill the cease and desist order issued by the board including the statement that Dwight employees "are free to become or remain members of the Textile Workers Union of America, affiliated with the C.I.O."[25]

The decision of the NLRB was welcomed by Dwight's TWUA members and the union's national leadership. But having been down this road before, they knew all too well that this was only a first step toward winning collective bargaining rights and securing a TWUA-negotiated contract. The climate in which the union organized, however, was vastly different than that prevailing during the late 1930s. The threat of rescinding Dwight's military production contracts was a big enough stick to force compliance with the NLRB ruling. Fearing the loss of government orders that amounted to nearly 90 percent of Dwight's output, management acquiesced and agreed to hold an election on 23 April 1943. In the days leading up to the election, management reinstated the four fired organizers, I. H. Atkins, Marvin Gaskey, James Ward, and C. H. Hartline. This

was clear evidence that the TWUA could protect its members and exactly the proof many Dwight workers needed before putting their livelihoods on the line and signing up with the union.[26]

Successful CIO drives in Gadsden at Gulf States Steel and Goodyear also helped to tip the balance in favor of the TWUA. The United Steel Workers of America won its certification election at Gulf States in March 1943, and the steel workers proved themselves vital allies in the organization of the Dwight mill. "[W]e had a lot of steel workers would talk to the people about the union. 'Say we got a union. We got by. We got it organized now'," Dwight TWUA member Hilburn Garrett said. " . . . [T]he people that worked in the cotton mill, say, 'Well, if a big company as Gulf States Steel is, if they had to accept the union, what is the reason . . . that Dwight won't have it to?' " After the United Rubber Workers won their 7 April 1943 certification election at the Goodyear plant, the *News Digest* of Birmingham observed that "[t]he coming election in the Dwight Mills at Alabama City . . . is expected to give labor a chance against the reactionary elements that have been in control in Gadsden for many years." On 23 April 1943, Dwight's workforce voted in favor of TWUA Local 576, 1629 to 205, a ratio of nearly eight to one. A week later, the National Labor Relations Board certified the TWUA-CIO as the collective bargaining agent for the over 1,800 production employees of the Dwight Manufacturing Company.[27]

Contract negotiations between the company and the union began on 1 June 1943. The negotiators for the Dwight Manufacturing Company were Charles Adams, Gardner Nichols, Thomas Cousins, and Borden Burr, Dwight's president, treasurer, general manager, and company counsel, respectively. H. S. Williams, Alabama State TWUA director, and TWUA Southwest director R. R. Lawrence led the union's negotiating team. But by mid-July the two sides were deadlocked over issues relating to scheduled work hours, shop rules, leaves of absence, hourly and piece rates, and especially the union's insistence on a maintenance-of-membership clause and the company's demand for a permanent no-strike pledge. The TWUA referred the case to the National War Labor Board, which immediately sent the matter into arbitration. Yet on the one-year anniversary in April 1944 of the certification of TWUA Local 576 at the Dwight mill, the union still did not have a contract.[28]

As bargaining continued into the summer of 1944, the union and the company made little headway in their contract negotiations and the employees at the Dwight Manufacturing Company grew increasingly restless. Members of TWUA Local 576 found themselves in an untenable position. If the local struck to force management's hand, the NWLB would immediately place a hold on their case, only resulting in further delay. As early as October of 1943, H. S. Williams wrote to the regional NWLB Disputes Division director, Paul Styles,

that the situation at the Dwight Company was "pretty bad" and that he did not "know how much longer we can continue to keep the people in the mill." Williams reiterated his "understanding that when a disputed case is certified to the War Labor Board that the parties shall remain status quo until the board acts on the disputed matters," but pointed out that Dwight management had been increasing workloads and cutting pay. Tensions were only heightened when union representatives attempting to address shop-floor grievances heard the company's standard response to union members' complaints: "that they, the Company, do not have to settle the complaints because there is no contract."[29]

Rank-and-file unionists had been threatening work stoppages and engaging in wildcat strikes since 1943, but the CIO's national leadership continued to insist that affiliated locals comply with the no-strike pledge and NWLB grievance procedures. What was transpiring at the Dwight Manufacturing Company during the spring of 1944 was happening in mills throughout the South. In response, delegates at the TWUA's biennial meeting called for an end to the union's no-strike pledge to protest the snail's pace of NLWB decision making and the board's inability to force compliance with its rulings. As contract negotiations entered into their twelfth month, the patience of the Dwight local's members was worn thin. The Dwight Company had routinely ignored NWLB directives to maintain workloads, wages, and job assignments as the bargaining continued, knowing that the board's significant backlog of cases coupled with the military's critical need for textiles would make immediate punitive action unlikely.[30]

The union's leadership managed to avert numerous threats of department-based work stoppages, but by mid-June 1944 a factory-wide strike was imminent. "[A]s you know . . . we have been stalled off by the War Labor Board now for a year," Local 576 president Paul Wilson wrote to T. Van Hecke, Regional War Labor Board chairman in Atlanta. "The company is using every discriminatory method known. The people here at Dwight say they will not stand for this abuse any longer and unless they can find out something about their contract they are going to take a long vacation."[31] With the situation at the Dwight Manufacturing Company at a breaking point, the regional board expedited the local's case and issued a threat to Dwight's negotiators that if the company did not come to terms with the union, the board would recommend the termination of all Dwight's outstanding government contracts. Facing the dual threats of a strike and loss of its lucrative military orders, the company finally capitulated, and on 14 August 1944 signed a contract, including a maintenance-of-membership clause and dues checkoff, with TWUA Local 576.[32]

Although the TWUA's unionization campaign through the mid-1940s occurred within circumscribed areas in thousands of individual departments

within hundreds of separate mills, the New Deal and World War II had a nationalizing effect on the cotton textile industry and its workforce. The collective bargaining bureaucracy established by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act and contract negotiations and implementations during the 1940s under the auspices of the National War Labor Board drew increasing numbers of textile workers into a nationwide collective bargaining apparatus and bound them to its rules. The 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), moreover, set nationwide standards for minimum wages, maximum working hours, and child labor, key issues that New England textile manufacturers and unionists alike had pointed to since the late nineteenth century as responsible for the industry's flight southward. At the end of World War II, textile workers remained among the lowest paid industrial workers in the United States. Nevertheless, in spite of inflation they found commonality from North to South in the significant material gains of wartime pay increases, which more than doubled average hourly earnings, and for increased numbers of operatives, through their collective membership in the TWUA.[33]

By the spring of 1946, membership in the TWUA had increased significantly to 450,000 members, 200,000 more than at the union's prewar peak. Through the intervention of the National War Labor Board, the union had won important first-time contracts with some of the South's largest and historically most antiunion cotton textile companies, including inroads at the Dan River Mills in Virginia, and the Erwin Cotton Mills, Cone Mills, Harriet and Henderson Cotton Mills, and the Marshall Field and Company Mills, all located in North Carolina. The center of textile unionism, nevertheless, remained firmly entrenched in New England. By war's end, 80 percent of the U.S. textile industry was located in the South, but only 20 percent of the region's workforce worked under a TWUA contract.[34]

The South remained a haven for New England mill owners seeking lower production costs. Mill closures in and relocations from the region continued throughout the war, and 250,000 textile production jobs were lost in the region while the South gained more than 100,000. The national legislation that had the potential to equalize the long-standing differences between North and South in wages and working conditions took on a regional character that perpetuated and sometimes exacerbated them. The minimum wage and forty-hour workweek standards passed as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, for example, lessened the production-cost gap between mills in the North and South. But the legislation codified working hours that were already normative throughout most of the industry, and in the vast majority of New England mills, all but the most unskilled operatives already earned wages at or above the FLSA minimum. Forty-four percent of southern textile operatives saw their wages rise

as a result of FLSA minimum wage provisions in the fall of 1939, but only 6 percent of northern millhands were affected. Regional minimum-wage implementation allowances built into the FLSA to secure southern support for the bill in Congress, however, initially created a two-tiered minimum wage system that perpetuated the regional wage disparity. At the end of World War II, the wage differential between northern and southern mills was nearly 15 percent, the same degree of difference that existed in 1907. The success of the Textile Workers Union of America in securing union-negotiated contracts in the Northeast that included higher wages and benefits provisions also drove up costs in many northern mills, but not southern ones. In light of the limited ability of federal legislation and NWLB-mandated wartime wage increases to bring the industry's regional standards into line, nationwide unionization was all the more important.[35]

As part of the 1946 CIO-led organizing drive dubbed "Operation Dixie," the TWUA launched a major postwar organizing campaign to bring the half-million textile workers in the South under the union's umbrella. As the largest industry in the region, the cotton textile industry was a main focus of Operation Dixie. What happened in the southern mills would make or break the entire drive. The campaign started during the summer of 1946 but quickly bogged down. Numerous corporate consolidations occurred in the textile industry during the war, but the historical problem of organizing hundreds of individual mills spread throughout the region remained. Because of the wage increases and corresponding material gains realized during the war years, the TWUA's emphasis on the economic benefits of unionization failed to resonate with unorganized workers. Operatives throughout the region remained skeptical that the union would bring them tangible benefits, while mill owners and community sympathizers mounted a successful antiunion offensive. Managers in southern cotton mills continued to use the extralegal tactics of coercion, intimidation, and firings to dissuade workers from joining the union. Where these failed and the TWUA made headway, management would often address workers' grievances over wages, workloads, vacations, seniority, and shop-floor rules, giving concessions to show their employees that they did not need a union to settle these issues for them. For their part, town governments passed local ordinances, such as bans on leafleting, that circumscribed organizers' activities. When the NLRB became involved in individual cases, it was typical for companies to utilize delaying tactics like those used by the Dwight Company during the late 1930s. From the press to the pulpits, textile mill management and antiunion sympathizers in communities throughout the region successfully crafted and spread a message that carried well in the increasingly conservative social climate that emerged as the Cold War began. Antiunionists painted the CIO as

a communist and irreligious organization, its organizers as "outside agitators," and its agenda as one bent on race-mixing and undermining the South's system of racial segregation.[36]

Operation Dixie limped along until its formal termination in 1953, but the campaign was effectively over by the winter of 1946. Operation Dixie's attempts to organize the textile industry were further stymied by the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. Taft-Hartley fundamentally limited the capacity of the CIO to organize southern industries during Operation Dixie by, among other things, outlawing mass picketing and sympathy boycotts, making changes to the rules for certification elections so that employers had a period of time in which to convince workers not to join a union, and giving states the authority to outlaw a variety of tools used by unions to bring in new members and maintain membership. Southern legislatures subsequently passed right-to-work laws that guaranteed employees the "right to work" under a union contract without being a member of the union and limiting the scope of dues check-off provisions and maintenance-of-membership clauses. Alabama enacted a right-to-work law on 28 August 1953, and of the other three leading southern textile states, North Carolina and Georgia passed right-to-work legislation in 1947 and South Carolina enacted a right-to-work statute in 1954. In the end, Operation Dixie did not bring about the massive organization hoped for and desperately needed by the TWUA, and the union lost nearly 60 percent of the NLRB elections called during the campaign. By 1950 the TWUA had only 10,805 more southern mill workers under contract than at the start of the organizing drive.[37]

This is not to say, however, that the union's southern gains made through the 1940s were insignificant. Its union contracts in mills that were part of what came to be referred to as the "big five" textile companies in the region—Cone Mills, Dan River Mills, Erwin Mills, Lowenstein, and Marshall Field—were especially important. Management of unorganized southern mills continued the concessionary strategy used during Operation Dixie's active phase by meeting the prevailing union wage and benefits standards in the region as a way to keep the union at bay and undercut the incentives for employees to organize. In its attempt to bring southern standards into line with those in the more universally organized northern mills, the TWUA, therefore, focused the bulk of its energies not on organizing the unorganized mills but rather on contract negotiations with the big five.[38]

In March 1951, the Dwight Manufacturing Company became a subsidiary in one of the big five companies when it finalized a merger that made Dwight part of the Cone chain of southern textile mills. In December, the Cone Mills Board of Directors elected Henry Nichols, former chairman of the now-defunct

Dwight Board of Directors, a vice president of the Cone company. The in-plant management and operations of the Gadsden mill remained relatively untouched. A two million dollar expansion of the Dwight mill begun under the old corporate structure continued. By the end of 1951, Cone management announced that its year-end net sales figures reflected a 12.5 percent increase. "This increase," stockholders learned at the annual meeting from President and Chairman of the Board Herman Cone, "was largely represented by sales made by the Dwight plant."[39]

During the inaugural year of Dwight's operations as part of Cone Mills, the TWUA, acting through the newly formed National Cotton-Rayon Policy Committee, made another far-reaching attempt to bring southern standards into line with northern ones. With large numbers of TWUA contracts set to expire during the spring of 1951, the union issued a set of national demands on which they would base the renegotiations of these contracts. The union's most important and most controversial call was for an increase in the minimum pay rate to $1.19 per hour and an across-the-board 12 percent wage increase for all workers currently earning more than the minimum level. Other demands included a cost-of-living escalator that would automatically boost wages to match increases in the cost of living. Addressing the disparity of benefits that pushed northern production costs well above southern ones, the TWUA also wanted employee pension programs, a minimum of eight paid holidays per year, and company-paid medical insurance programs. The union set 15 March 1951 as the deadline for employers to meet the union's demands. If the demands were not met by then, a general strike would ensue.[40]

New England's mill owners agreed to the TWUA's terms with the caveat that similar ones be enacted in the South, and averted the strike. But management in the South dismissed the TWUA terms outright. Southern mill owners underscored the competitive nature of the industry and the importance of keeping wages in line with nonunion firms in the region. But they also insisted that the wage increases demanded by the union would break the 10 percent cap that the federal government, in an attempt to control inflation, had placed on wages when the Korean War began. By mid-March negotiations between the union and mill owners in the South had produced virtually nothing. The union extended the strike deadline to the end of the month hoping to come to terms with the southern owners, but remaining firm in its plans to move forward with the strike. Yet by this time, the government had already significantly curtailed the military's purchases of cotton goods, which caused significant shrinkage in demand. With little to lose but much to gain, southern owners ignored the TWUA demands and rebuffed the union's strike threat.[41]

Aerial view of the Dwight Manufacturing Company mill complex in Gadsden, Alabama, at the time of the merger with Cone Mills, Inc. of Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1951. (Courtesy Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Alabama)

In spite of the likelihood that a strike would fail to compel southern mill owners to capitulate to the TWUA's demands, the union moved forward with the strike call. On 1 April 1951, over forty thousand TWUA-affiliated southern mill workers walked off their jobs. The strike involved the nearly 55 percent of the Cone Mills' unionized workforce. The Dwight mill was the only one of Cone's subsidiaries to be completely shut down by the strike, while the other unionized mills in the Cone chain operated at varying percentages of capacity. Dwight general manager Thomas Cousins reported on the day following the walkout that all of Dwight's nearly 2,400 employees were on strike and that the mill was "completely closed." The local press pointed out, however, that only two other mills in Alabama were closed and that "the vast majority of the South's booming textile industry spun busily forward. There are about 425,000 cotton-rayon workers in the South. . . . The TWUA reported nearly 40,000 on strike." Throughout the strike, Cone management insisted that the Dwight workers return to their jobs under the terms of their expired contract until a new one could be agreed upon.[42]

On 5 May 1951, the TWUA national leadership made the recommendation that its striking locals return to their jobs on the condition that their employers

enter into federal mediation to solve outstanding wage issues. Although Dwight Local 576 voted in favor of the proposal, Cone management rejected it outright. TWUA members in five other mills in the Cone chain returned to work in spite of the company's no-mediation position, but those at the Dwight mill remained out.[43]

In light of Local 576's decision to remain on strike, Cone management filed an injunction against the union hoping to break the strike. The sweeping injunction prohibited trespassing on Dwight property, assembling "in large groups at or around entrances to the plant" for the purposes of preventing the company "from engaging in its lawful occupation and business," and "conspiring to do or perform" any act listed in the injunction. Less than a week later, the company filed a contempt-of-court petition alleging that Local 576 picketers had violated the injunction when pickets "prevented the movement of [railroad] cars in delivering equipment for the construction of an addition to the plant because union members gathered around the end of the car nearest to the entrance to the plant . . . [and] refused to move when requested to do so." On the eve of the scheduled 23 May contempt hearing, Cone management and Local 576 restarted their contract negotiations. The company agreed to drop the charges against the union if a settlement could be reached within a week's time. Facing a potentially costly legal battle, on 30 May Local 576 voted overwhelmingly to accept a contract "virtually the same as the one which expired March 15" with the issues of wages, holiday pay, insurance benefits, and severance pay "open for further negotiations." Thus, the contract negotiations and agreement brought an anticlimactic end to the fifty-nine-day strike at the Dwight mill.[44]

The 1951 strike had serious repercussions for the TWUA. According to TWUA historian Timothy Minchin, in the wake of the strike, Cone's management was "angered and alienated" and insisted on and got the removal of dues check-off provisions from the contracts of all eight of its unionized plants. This loss of the checkoff in one of the largest southern textile companies was a particularly hard blow for the national union, which had spent over half of its financial resources on the failed strike. The strike left the TWUA with some of its strongest unions in disarray, and its national leadership was bogged down by infighting and a secession movement mounted by a reconstituted UTWA. Confidence in the TWUA's ability to negotiate better wages and benefits for its members in future contracts plummeted in the wake of the strike, and large numbers of the TWUA's southern members began dropping out of the union. Within ten years of the strike the union experienced a 60 percent decline in its dues-paying members. Nonunion companies in the South, moreover, no longer seeing the union movement as a threat, became increasingly unwilling to meet the pay and benefits standards prevailing in the organized plants. The largest of these

unorganized mills, including Cannon Mills, J. P. Stevens, and Burlington, became the new standard bearers for regional wages, and mill liquidations in New England hastened as the gap between production costs in the organized North and unorganized South continued to grow.[45]

Through the 1950s the TWUA faced additional problems resulting from more systemic changes within the textile industry as a whole. The postwar surge in textile sales leveled off by 1950 and depressed conditions that perpetuated with only a brief respite during the Korean War plagued the industry for the remainder of the decade. "Conditions throughout the industry were even more competitive than in previous years," reported Cone Mills in its annual report of 1957, adding that "[t]he import problem, with protection for our domestic markets from cheap labor areas, is of continuing concern." While the TWUA maintained its focus on correcting the North-South wage differential in the United States, the bigger problem was the fact that, as noted by historian James Cobb, even the South had become a high-wage region in comparison to many labor markets around the globe.[46]

The regional-national context of the cotton textile industry that had dominated the goals and organizing agenda of textile unionism in the United States since the Great Depression was becoming increasingly irrelevant in the face of an emerging national-global context. With the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947, the postwar years inaugurated a continuous, albeit contentious dismantling of the U.S. system of tariffs that had protected the U.S. textile industry from competition with goods made in low-wage foreign countries. Through the 1950s, the postwar revival and expansion of cotton goods manufacturing in Japan and India, as well as significant textile industry development in Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, the Philippines, and Pakistan, became a threat to the supremacy of U.S.-made goods in the global marketplace in much the same way that southern-made goods threatened domestic and international markets traditionally dominated by New England textile manufacturers during the late nineteenth century.[47]

In 1957 as a cost-saving measure, Cone Mills began selling to its employees the houses in Gadsden that the company owned and maintained. Still, throughout 1957 and 1958 Cone Mills ran the Dwight mill below its maximum capacity "on a curtailed and unprofitable basis," leading the local press to query "what is the fate of the nation's textile mills which, like Cone Mills in Gadsden, continue to fight the discouraging battle of foreign competition and governmental indifference?"[48]

It was within the depressed condition of the industry that existed in 1958 that the TWUA and Cone were engaged in contract negotiations in the eight union plants in the company's chain of nineteen mills. At Dwight, the union called

for a new three-year contract that included an increase in the plant's minimum wage to $1.25 per hour, with proportional raises for all employees currently working above that level. "In spite of the wage increases you have been hearing about in the industry, wage rates at Dwight are equal to or considerably above the wages of many of our competitors," W. H. White, Cone Mills' Dwight Division manager said as negotiations continued. Tacitly admitting that nonunion mills in the region, which paid the federal minimum wage of $1.00 per hour, set the wage standards against which all were compared, White added that "it is essential to keep wage costs from getting out of line with our competition. This is why we are unwilling to increase wages at this time."[49]

Ten days before TWUA Local 576's contract was set to expire, Caesar Cone, president of Cone Mills, issued an ominous statement to the union. "Even if the committee and the employes [*sic*] represented by it agree to the terms of our proposed new contract, this in itself is no guarantee that the future of the Dwight plant is assured," he warned. Hinting that if employees did not yield to management, the mill would be closed and their jobs lost, Cone added, "The company is going to have a difficult time getting Dwight costs in line with its competition. . . . We are battling to keep this house in good order, rather than have it tumble." When the letter became public two days later, civic leaders and Gadsden's business community urged representatives on both sides of the negotiating table to work together for the good of the wider community. "Affected, too, would be the jobs of other employes [*sic*] occupied in various occupations, and business in general could suffer setbacks," the *Gadsden Times* wrote. " . . . Gadsden cannot afford to be known as a city which loses business and industry instead of gaining them. It is the hope and prayer . . . that Cone management and personnel will safely reach the cooperative spirit necessary for the healthy and profitable results at the plant, and with proper regard for our fellow man at all levels of community life."[50]

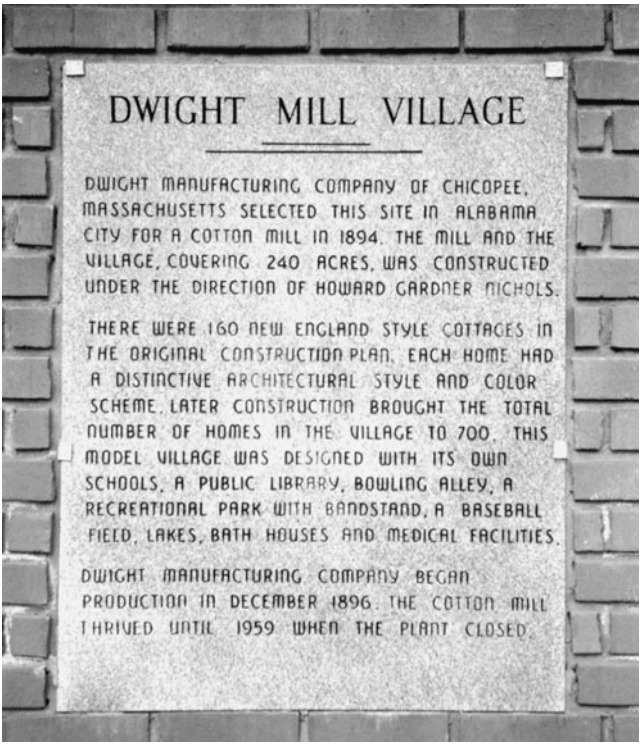
Cone management ultimately used the contract negotiations as an opening wedge to rid themselves of an antiquated mill and the union wages, benefits, and workload standards prevailing there. Luke Clark, president of Local 576 said "the union committee was shocked by the many contract negotiations that the company was seeking to put it mildly." These negotiations included a nine-cent decrease in the union minimum wage, the elimination of provisions for arbitration of disputes concerning workloads and wages, restrictions on rights to file grievances on vacation and holiday pay, and changes in the seniority clauses that had provided protections for laid-off workers. The local found itself in a weak bargaining position, especially since the company had granted small wage increases in contract negotiations in its other mills to ensure that they would not strike too. With a walkout imminent and what Luke Clark foresaw as "its

ultimate tragic ending," the union backed off its original wage demands and asked the company to re-sign the old contract with no changes. "The union tried desperately to get the company negotiators to back off from their punitive and unrealistic position," Clark said the day before the contract was set to expire, but "up to this hour with no success."[51]

The over 2,100 workers at the Dwight mill went out on strike on Monday, 16 March 1959. "We told the people, 'Now it's your choice'," Burns Cox, then vice president of Local 576 remembered of the union's decision to strike. "They took a vote and said 'Shut it down.' And down she went." Negotiations at Dwight resumed three weeks later with a federal mediator and representatives of Gadsden's Chamber of Commerce present. As contract negotiations took place, production continued in Cone's other subsidiary mills. Although Cone had granted marginal wage increases to the unionized workers at the company's Edna, Eno, Print Works, Revolution, Granite, Tabardrey, and White Oaks Plants during their 1958–59 contract negotiations, Cone management gave no ground in its contract talks with Gadsden Local 576. Knowing that Dwight's production could be easily shifted to the company's other mills, Cone executives decided that the Dwight factory was too unprofitable, its machinery too outdated, and its workforce too union to continue operations there.[52]

On 10 April 1959, the company announced plans to permanently close the Gadsden mill. "The industrial base of this city was shaken today with the announcement by Cone Mills Inc. of Greensboro, N.C. that it had decided to close and abandon its Dwight Division plant here," the *Gadsden Times* said of the news, adding that the "economic picture here is such that it would be difficult for Dwight workers to be absorbed readily by other industries." When the company said it would temporarily reopen the mill "for the purpose of running out the stock" before the final shutdown, union members voted to end the strike and agreed to return to work hoping there "was a chance the company would change its mind."[53]

At the end of June 1959, however, the Dwight mill in Gadsden turned out its final bolts of cotton goods and ceased production. "Major losses involved in closing this plant have been reflected in the Company's 1959 financial statements," Cone's management reported at the company's annual convention in 1959, "and no further substantial losses are anticipated." However, the loss for the community of Gadsden was extensive and palpable. "That's when Gadsden died," said former employee Laura Beard. The single shutdown of the Dwight mill amounted to over one-third of the textile mill jobs lost nationwide in 1959 due to mill closures. An estimated ten thousand people living in Etowah County who were "fed, sheltered and clothed with mill money" lost their primary means of subsistence. The Dwight plant became a cotton warehouse, and although it was


DWIGHT MILL VILLAGE
DWIGHT MANUFACTURING COMPANY OF CHICOPEE, MASSACHUSETTS SELECTED THIS SITE IN ALABAMA CITY FOR A COTTON MILL IN 1894. THE MILL AND THE VILLAGE, COVERING 240 ACRES, WAS CONSTRUCTED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF HOWARD GARDNER NICHOLS.
THERE WERE 160 NEW ENGLAND STYLE COTTAGES IN THE ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION PLAN. EACH HOME HAD A DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE AND COLOR SCHEME. LATER CONSTRUCTION BROUGHT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMES IN THE VILLAGE TO 700. THIS MODEL VILLAGE WAS DESIGNED WITH ITS OWN SCHOOLS, A PUBLIC LIBRARY, BOWLING ALLEY, A RECREATIONAL PARK WITH BANDSTAND, A BASEBALL FIELD, LAKES, BATH HOUSES AND MEDICAL FACILITIES.
DWIGHT MANUFACTURING COMPANY BEGAN PRODUCTION IN DECEMBER 1896. THE COTTON MILL THRIVED UNTIL 1959 WHEN THE PLANT CLOSED.

The marker denoting the former entrance to the Dwight Manufacturing Company's mill village, located at the corner of Marston Avenue and Coolidge Circle in Gadsden, Alabama. (Photograph by the author)

the largest in the country with a storage capacity of forty thousand bales, it only reemployed twenty-five workers. Many former Dwight employees could not find work locally. Others working on significantly reduced salaries in nonunion jobs elsewhere in the Gadsden area could not continue to pay mortgages on their mill village homes and were forced to sell. "There wasn't no work here . . . and that left a lot of people here with nothing to do," said Grady Kilgro of the shutdown. "People just couldn't draw Social Security, stuff like that," he added, "so they . . . was in a real mess."[54]

In September 1978, the cotton warehouse located in the former Dwight plant closed and the following year demolition of the old mill began to make way for a supermarket and shopping center. On 20 September 1978 a wrecking crew tore down the mill smokestacks, the last physical vestiges of the Dwight Manufacturing Company. "I would have liked to have seen 'em keep one smokestack, and I

believe I'm not by myself," said Melton Ballard, whose grandfather helped build them and whose father worked in the mill until fired after the 1934 strike. "I still feel like that mill is still there somewhere. Of course we know it's not. Walkin' around in there when we're buyin' groceries on the—about on the spot where my dad walked around and worked. Well, it gives me a pretty bad feelin'."[55]

Just as the Dwight Manufacturing Company's construction of a southern branch mill during the depression of 1893 and its decision to completely shut down its Massachusetts operations in 1927 foreshadowed mill relocations and closures that would become normative throughout New England, events at the Dwight Manufacturing Company's Gadsden mill between 1935 and 1959 also pointed toward wider trends that would shape the southern textile industry through the last decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, the scenario that played out at the Dwight mill and in the city of Gadsden was one that would be repeated in mill after mill throughout the region over the next four decades.

CONCLUSION

Since Reconstruction, the industrial economy of the South had been based on low-wage, low-skill labor. By the 1920s, southern boosters used the regional wage differential between North and South and the absence of unionized labor in the region to attract the attention and investment of not only New England textile manufacturers but also entrepreneurs undertaking a wide array of industrial pursuits. "The pushing of textile production in the South while New England mills get wage cuts and slack time is a conspicuous bit of current history," UTWA president Thomas McMahon observed in 1928; " . . . sawmill and planning mill products, furniture factories, railroad car repair shops, the building of automobile bodies, the making of stoves and cast-iron pipe and other iron work, and the manufacture of men's clothing has also contributed to the increase . . . in the factory workers of the low-wage states." For a growing number of manufacturing businesses, the savings a company could realize from the South's low wages and tax rates, and from industry-friendly state and local governments offering subsidies by way of land grants and low-cost loans, often made the difference between profits and losses. As workers in more and more mass industries located in the North and Midwest organized during the 1930s and 1940s, a modus operandi for state and local government officials and communities throughout the South was ensuring that the region would remain a haven for companies seeking to escape high production costs elsewhere. The link tying southern prosperity to a union-free environment that had been part of the New South's mantra since the 1880s only strengthened after World War II.[1]

Within this climate, the capital flight and mill closures that had become standard in the New England textile industry by the end of the 1920s only accelerated through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. What happened in Chicopee, Massachusetts, with the closure of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's mills there in 1927, became the norm in textile mill towns throughout the region over the next four decades. Suffering from the ill effects of outdated production facilities and southern and international competition, by 1970 nearly three hundred thousand textile industry jobs in New England had been lost to bankruptcy or relocation to the South. Displaced workers struggled to find work, and when they did, their standards of living were commonly lowered, as the new positions they secured were often in unorganized light industries or in the service sector, where pay scales were lower than in the unionized mills.[2]

By the 1970s, southern manufacturers too began embracing strategies to maintain company profitability similar to those that the Dwight Manufacturing Company used as early as the 1890s and that became normative throughout the New England industry during the years of its most significant decline, from the 1920s through the 1960s. The globalization of textile production meant that U.S.-made goods competed with those manufactured in countries where wages were lower, work days longer, and government-mandated workplace standards and protections for workers' rights atypical. This reality forced southern mill owners to make their operations more cost effective and efficient. Mill managers worked to lower labor costs through the installation of labor-saving machinery and the complete automation of numerous aspects of the production process. By the 1980s, a leveling-out of the advantages afforded by technology occurred and the focus of U.S. textile companies shifted more and more to gaining a larger share of the market through mergers and buyouts. To lower costs of production further, management focused as well on extracting concessions on matters of wages and workload standards from the small number of union locals that did exist within the U.S. textile industry. Other textile manufacturers, reflecting the shift some New England companies made from coarse to fine goods in the face of southern competition at the turn of and early years of the twentieth century, specialized output and sought out niche markets where the now-global race to the bottom had not yet begun. Opening branch factories abroad and closing domestic mills, paralleling the strategy the Dwight Company embraced in its fight to remain profitable within a context of interregional competition in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, became a strategy of choice for a growing majority of U.S.-based producers in the global economy of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[3]

It is nearly impossible in an age of global production to halt the constant search by owners of industries for areas where their operations will yield the highest profits. It is possible, nevertheless, for those left in globalization's wake to anticipate change and look to new strategies that might mitigate the potentially devastating impact of factory closures and job loss. But, as AFL president William Green said in 1929 of the capital flight from the North to the South in the United States, it is first necessary "to recognize it in operation and to act upon it accordingly."[4] There are lessons, especially about how organized labor might be involved in the process of capital relocation, that can be learned from the story of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's move from Chicopee, Massachusetts, to Alabama City, Alabama, and the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century migration of the New England textile industry to the South.

"Imaginary state lines," one textile manufacturer observed in 1904, "are not observed in industrial competition."[5] And indeed, capital easily transcended

state boundaries. A fundamental problem for Massachusetts textile unionists between the 1880s and the 1920s was that the region's textile capital had already begun a process of nationalizing while they had not. Manufacturers, like the owners of the Dwight Manufacturing Company, approached southern competition by embracing change, but organized mill workers remained tied to a craft-centered, intraregional focus. The craft unions that existed in textile centers throughout Massachusetts at the turn of the century established standards of work for their members within particular mills and locales and acted as a special-interest group to secure the passage of labor legislation that had an impact, regardless of union affiliation, statewide. But the bargaining that went on between the union locals and management in Massachusetts mills and the lobbying that occurred at the statehouse in Boston had little bearing on the standardization of workplace norms for the industry at large. Even within the corporate structure of the Dwight Manufacturing Company, while management effected national policies that shaped labor recruitment and conditions of employment, the wages and workplace standards unionized workers at the Chicopee mill secured did not extend to their fellow Dwight operatives in Alabama City.

A potential turning point for Bay State textile unionists came in 1901 when the southern-based National Union of Textile Workers and the northern-based American Federation of Textile Operatives officially amalgamated into the United Textile Workers of America. With the creation of the UTWA, for the first time an organizational structure was in place through which a truly national textile union could have been established and managed. At the time of the 1901 NUTW-AFTO merger, however, mulespinners and loomfixers especially continued to see their priorities through craft and local-regional lenses. This meant that their collective experience in organizing, operating, and funding viable unions was not extended to the unskilled operatives who constituted the largest portion of the textile workforce in the mills nationwide. Instead, they continued to use skill, not numbers, as the locus of their power, choosing to shore up existing craft unions and bargaining mechanisms that were locally entrenched but becoming increasingly irrelevant through technological change and the growth of the southern portion of the industry. Although this "North first" approach appeared to textile unionists to be the most effective use of resources and brought short-term organizing and bargaining successes, it yielded little in the long term. By not throwing their support behind a sustained effort to organize the masses of southern operatives, northern unionists fundamentally undermined the UTWA's strength, capacity for long-term viability, and ability, particularly during the 1920s and early 1930s, to prevent the erosion of its New England membership base.

Because the most dynamic turn-of-the-century textile industry growth occurred in the South, the UTWA's decade-long abandonment of attempts to unionize southern mills after the failed Augusta, Georgia, strike in 1902, likewise, proved crucial. The UTWA lost the opportunity to establish a foothold in the South until World War I, but by then the conditions for New England's decline were already in place. As the craft unions abandoned both their financial backing and moral support for the organization of southern locals in the wake of the Augusta defeat, their local-regional perspective and the unionists' conservatism became even more entrenched, as did the disparity of conditions between the mills of Massachusetts and those in the Piedmont South. The absence of unions in southern textile mills and the power they could potentially exert in the legislative arena were important factors in decisions made by mill owners, like those of the Dwight Manufacturing Company, to build branch plants in the South. Competition from these unorganized southern mills increased through the early twentieth century, and New England mill owners used it as their rationale, especially during the 1920s, to break unions, lower wages, increase workloads, and eventually abandon operations in the North altogether. When the UTWA finally began a concerted effort to organize southern mills in 1929, it was too little, too late. The reality for the UTWA in the late 1920s and through the 1934 General Strike, as well as for the TWUA through the 1940s and 1950s, was that the unions found themselves trying to save a declining industry in one region by combating the low-wage, nonunion conditions that were the foundation for industrial growth in the other. The time for a shift in focus and for a firm commitment to organizing the South was not when the most unionized portion of the industry had already experienced its decline, but before.

New England textile unionists found in the 1920s that, without a significant presence in the South, their ability to effectively bargain with management, and in fact the entire regional industry, rested on an unstable foundation. Because southern workers remained unorganized, unions and workers had difficulty securing from southern state governments the passage of basic workplace regulations. Neither could they ensure compliance with or the long-term efficacy of the limited state-mandated age, hour, and safety standards that were eventually established in the region. Massachusetts unionists were part and parcel to the creation and enactment of some of the best regulatory labor legislation in the United States at the turn of the century, but the laws collectively would become an albatross around the necks of themselves and Bay State mill owners in the ongoing battle for industry supremacy between the textile mills in New England and those in the Piedmont South. As regulatory legislation throughout New England became more stringent, so too did the effects of competition from

southern mills, where hours remained significantly longer, enforcement of child labor and education laws were lax, and statehouses continued to be dominated by adherents to the region's low-wage, antiunion, probusiness industrial boosterism. By the time the federal government implemented legislation as part of the New Deal that mandated nationwide labor standards and collective bargaining rights, the deindustrialization of New England's textile industry was, arguably, a foregone conclusion.

But even through the 1970s and 1980s when international competition began taking a toll on the U.S. textile industry as a whole in the same way southern competition undercut the New England sector earlier in the century, retreat and protectionism, as exemplified by the "Buy American" campaigns of these years, characterized much of organized labor's approach to saving jobs. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the textile unionists' insular strategy was a fatal flaw in their attempts to combat the relocation of their industry from a high-wage region with an established union base to a low-wage, open-shop one. As mills closed and their union base shrunk, unionists' ability to effect change declined proportionately. Today, a continued retreat to such an approach will likely result in similar outcomes as migrations of capital occur from nation to nation.

The elements shaping the process of the Dwight Manufacturing Company's relocation from Massachusetts to Alabama in the 1920s, and the failure decades later of protectionist agendas to stop the flow of jobs from the United States to nations abroad, underscore the need for workers and communities to recognize that employment security and the best workplace standards are inexorably tied to the worst that exist in any industry. Labor organizations in developed nations, therefore, must reject complacency and reinvigorate their organizing efforts. But most importantly, they must do so with an international outlook and, as was necessary for New England textile unionists to do with southern millhands during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, view workers in developing nations not as competitors per se but as coworkers with whom they have a shared cause. The fluidity of capital has made national boundaries increasingly irrelevant, and it is imperative that unions organize and sustain organizational ties across regional and national lines. Organized labor as well must be willing to forge strategic partnerships and work in concert with governmental and nongovernmental organizations representing a wide range of groups to alter the current status quo. Only through the power of numbers might workers have the financial and political resources currently at the disposal of the representatives of capital to attain an effective voice within supranational mechanisms and organizations that regulate global trade agreements and labor standards.

As the scope of corporate operations has shifted over time from local to re-

gional, from regional to national, and from national to international, so have the difficulties that workers face in effecting change. U.S. unions in the twenty-first century, similar to New England textile unionists a century ago, need to fundamentally alter how they use their financial and political resources and who they organize. The unionization of workers the world over during the twenty-first century may prove as impossible a task as organizing textile operatives above and below the Mason-Dixon Line in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, unionists in highly developed nations like the United States must make a concerted effort. If and how this will be done remain open to speculation, but a better awareness of the capital mobility processes that have occurred in the past offers invaluable clues to the pitfalls to avoid and to the strategies that may promise success in the future.

NOTES

Introduction

1. *New York Times*, 3 September 2000.

2. *New York Times*, 26 December 2002. Writing during the early 1940s, Joseph Schumpter described a process of "creative destruction" wherein the decline of old sectors of an economy makes possible the development of new sectors in their place. Joseph Schumpter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1942), cited and discussed in Bluestone and Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America*, 9.

3. On the use of case studies as a valuable framework for examining capital mobility trends and deindustrialization as they occur in various industrial settings, see Craypo and Nissen, eds., *Grand Designs*; Cowie, *Capital Moves*; Cowie and Heathcott, eds., *Beyond the Ruins.*

4. Examples of early works focusing on mill owners and boosters include Ware, *Early New England Cotton Manufacture*; Josephson, *The Golden Threads*; Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South*; Cash, *The Mind of the South*; Gaston, *The New South Creed.*

5. See especially Dublin, *Women at Work*; and Hall et al., *Like a Family*. Other works include Hareven, *Amoskeag* and *Family Time and Industrial Time*; Cumbler, *Working-Class Community in Industrial America*; Blewett, *The Last Generation*; McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*; Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880–1920*; McHugh, *Mill Family*; Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*; Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*; Byerly, *Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls*; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*; Flynt, *Poor but Proud.*

6. See, for example, Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*; Kuhn, *Contesting the New South Order*; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*; Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*; Blewett, *Constant Turmoil*; Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism*; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*; Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*; Clark, *Like Night and Day.*

7. Notable exceptions are Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*; Kuhn, *Contesting the New South Order*; and Clark, *Like Night and Day.*

8. The process of writing in-depth studies of workers' cultures fractured American history into myriad fields and sub-fields. Numerous historians, dubbed "new institutionalists," have responded to this loss of synthesis by shifting their focus back to the study of institutions, especially trade unions, which had dominated the approach to studying labor history through the 1960s. But these new historians have broadened the economic-driven focus of earlier studies by exploring the connections between and dynamics of the relationships that existed among various institutions, especially the state, and how they shaped the realities of working people. Theda Skocpol made the call in 1985 to "bring the state back in" to historical analysis in her essay in Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In.* Examples of recent works that do this include Dubofsky,

The State and Labor in Modern America; Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics*; McCartin, *Labor's Great War*.

9. Examples of the use of location theory in analyses of capital mobility within the U.S. textile industry include Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, and Kane, *Textiles in Transition*. Cowie's *Capital Moves* is a less economically-driven capital mobility analysis and includes factors of community life, gender, and labor organization at the local level.

10. See for example Saxon, "Fall River and the Decline of the New England Textile Industry"; Gross, *The Course of Industrial Decline*; and Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*.

11. Portions of chapters 2–5 are reprinted by permission of the University of Missouri Press from "Beginnings of the Global Economy: Capital Mobility in the 1890s U.S. Textile Industry," in *Global Perspectives on Industrial Transformation in the American South* edited by Susanna Delfino and Michele Gillespie, copyright 2005 by the Curators of the University of Missouri.

12. Abend, "U.S. Mills Move South"; Jones and Anderton, "Shaping Strategic Alliances in Mexico"; Patterson, "Cone to Build in Guatemala"; Cone Mills, *A Century of Excellence*, 45.

One. "Positively Alarming": Southern Boosters, Piedmont Mills, and New England Responses

1. Dublin, *Women at Work*; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 15, 36; Jonathan Prude, "The Social System of Early New England Textile Mills," in Frisch and Walkowitz, eds., *Working-Class America*, 1–36; François Weil, "Capitalism and Industrialization," 1334–45. On the development of the Lowell textile industry during the early nineteenth century, and on the Boston Associates, also see Ware, *Early New England Cotton Manufacture*; Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*.

2. Weil, "Capitalism and Industrialization," 1343–47; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 52–53; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 24–25; Plourde-Barker, *Chicopee*, 9, 15. Weil demonstrated that it was locally-based capital that funded the initial development of the cotton textile industry in Chicopee, a fundamental revision of the long-accepted argument that the Boston Associates financed Chicopee's textile mills from the start. See Weil, "Capitalism and Industrialization," 1336–40.

3. Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 25–28; Weil, "Capitalism and Industrialization," 1347–52; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 52–53; Plourde-Barker, *Chicopee*, 9, 15.

4. Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 50–62, 64–88, 91, 138–51; Plourde-Barker, *Chicopee*, 29, 48, 63, 115; Weil, "Usines en Ville," 111, 115–35.

5. Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 151–60; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 87–88.

6. *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Convention of the Southern Cotton Spinners Association*, 1901, 42–43. Hereafter cited as *SCSA Proceedings*.

7. A large body of scholarly literature exists that engages with the question of who drove the establishment of cotton mills in the postbellum South, with the crux of the debate focusing on issues of continuity and discontinuity between the antebellum South and the postwar South, and on the question of who controlled the economic development of the "new" South. Broadus Mitchell in *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* (1921) and W. J. Cash in *Mind of the South* (1941) forwarded the first major treatments of the continuity argument. The continuity argument can also be found in Billings, *Planters and the Making of a "New South"* (1979) and in Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South* (1978). C. Vann Woodward offered the first fundamental revision of the continuity argument in *Origins of the New South* (1951), followed by Carlton in *Mill and Town in South Carolina* (1982), Gavin Wright in *Old South, New South* (1986), and Hall et al., in *Like a Family* (1987). On the continuity-discontinuity debate, also see Harold Woodman, "Economic Reconstruction and the Rise of the New South" in Boles and Nolen, eds., *Interpreting Southern History*; John Beck, "Building the New South"; Beatty, "Lowells of the South."

8. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 5, no. 11; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 210–11; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 118–21, 134; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 17–19.

9. See especially Wright, *Old South, New South*, 130–31; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 13–21; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 24–27; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 62–70.

10. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 5, no. 17.

11. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 393–408; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 19–35, 99–111; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 179–86; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 3–6; Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 13–15, 198–205; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 19–22; Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*, 13–19; Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*, 1–11; Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, 18–22.

12. Wright, *Old South, New South*, 129–30; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 10–18, 31–40; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 536; Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 113–14; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 25–26, 30–35; Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 55–66; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 23–61, 83–86; McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 17–18; McHugh, *Mill Family*, 7–8.

13. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 12, no. 1; *Transactions of the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association*, Annual Meeting, 1897, 93. Hereafter cited as *NECMA Transactions*.

14. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 29–31; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 133–34, 205–22; McHugh, *Mill Family*, 5–7; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 56–57; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 436; Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South*, 127–32; Mary Oates, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 118–23; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, especially, 5–6, 19, 35.

15. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 10, no. 3; *SCSA Proceedings*, 1903, 45–46; *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 11, no. 17. On the roots of the southern booster message and the region's leading industrial spokesmen, see Gaston, *The New South Creed*.

16. *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1895, 69.

17. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 5, no. 21; vol. 10, no. 8.

18. *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1881, 29–30; *Commercial Bulletin*, 20 August 1881; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 124, 131–32; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 78–79; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 129; Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South*, 71, 122–23.

19. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 27, no. 4; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 124.

20. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 5, no. 4; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 23, 156–58; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 9; David Doane, "Regional Cost Differentials and Textile Location," 4, 12–20.

21. *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1895, 199; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 23; Mary Oates, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 115.

22. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 80–81; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 9, 113, 116; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 125; Chen, "Regional Differences in Costs and Productivity," 564–66; David Doane, "Regional Cost Differentials and Textile Location," 14–16, 20–22.

23. Wright, *Old South, New South*, 13, 51–80, 124–25; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 115–17; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 80–81.

24. Mary Oates, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 122–23; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 13; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 436; Terrill, "Eager Hands for Southern Textiles," 84–90; Stokes, "Black and White Labor," 1–12, 98–120, 163–96.

25. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 24, no. 7; *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 2 February 1901. On black labor and the development of the late nineteenth-century southern textile industry, see especially Stokes, "Black and White Labor"; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 462–92; Janiewski, "Southern Honor, Southern Dishonor," in Baron, ed., *Work Engendered*, 70–91.

26. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 20, no. 16 and vol. 9, no. 14; *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 12 November 1898. Since the 1970s, historians have debunked this booster-created characterization of southern labor. For examples see McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest* and *The Knights of Labor in the South*; Hall et al., *Like a Family*; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South.*

27. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 15, no. 25; *SCSA Proceedings*, 1903, 151–52; *Commercial Bulletin*, 19 January 1895.

28. *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1898, 165; *Boston Advertiser* quoted in *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 23, no. 16; *Providence Railroad Journal* quoted in *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 15, no. 14; *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1895, 72. For views on the importance of sectional rivalry in shaping the development of the postwar southern textile industry, see Hearden, *Independence and Empire*; Gaston, *The New South Creed*; Beatty, "Lowells of the South," 51–61.

29. Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South*, 245. However, contemporary sources, which usually included estimates of mills planned and under construction, placed the 1900 southern figure at a much higher six million spindles. See *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1900, 189–90; *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 27 October 1900.

30. Mary Oates, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 44–80; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 125; Carlton and Coclanis, "Capital Mobility and Southern Industry," 88–90; Gaston, *The New South Creed*, 194–206.

Two. "Manufacturers Surely Cannot Be Expected to Continue": Legislation, Labor, and Depression

1. *Lynchburg News*, 18 January 1895.

2. *Labor Leader*, 19 March 1887; *Commercial Bulletin*, 19 January 1895.

3. Dublin, *Women at Work*, 112; Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 9; Charles Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation in Massachusetts," in Kingsbury, ed., *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, 4–13. Article hereafter cited as "Persons, 'The Early History of Factory Legislation.'"

4. From *Report on the Education of Children Employed in Manufacturing Establishments, Massachusetts House Committee on Education*, 1836, quoted in Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation," 17–18.

5. Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 9; Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation," 4–19, 93–97. For a complete list of Massachusetts statutes relating to child employment and education from 1838 to 1898, see Whittelsey, 107–11.

6. Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 62, 98–121; Dublin, *Women at Work*, 112; Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, 117. For background information on the economic conditions facilitating the 1830s workplace changes in Massachusetts textile mills and how they affected Lowell mill operatives see Dublin, *Women at Work*, 108–12.

7. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *House Document*, no. 50, March 1845, in John Commons et al., *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 8, (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1910), 131–51; Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation," 19–50, especially 42–50; Dublin, *Women at Work*, 108–31, especially 113–16.

8. Weil, "Usines en Ville," 137–39.

9. Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, 230–33, 262–67; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 482–84; Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 80–83; Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation," 98–101; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 1–21.

10. This interpretation differs significantly from the argument made by textile union historian Cletus Daniel, who asserted that craft-based unions in New England textile centers "provided only temporary advantages to skilled workers and nothing at all to the growing number of machine operatives whose lack of skills rendered them ineligible for membership." See Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 14–15.

11. Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation," 116–18; Montgomery, *Beyond Equality,* 230–33, 262–67; Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 80–83, 113–16; Dickinson, *Shall We Legislate*, 4; Blewett, *Constant Turmoil*, 102–40, especially 102–4. Blewett investigated the "gendering" of the ten-hour movement. For an overview of the gendering of protective legislation from the Civil War to World War I, see Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 180–214.

12. *Proceedings of the General Assembly of Massachusetts*, 1871, 1872, 1873; Dalton et al., *Leading the Way*, 152–56.

13. Dickinson, *Shall We Legislate*, 8–9; Weil, "Usines en Ville," 138–39.

14. "Address to the Workingmen of Lowell," 24 August 1870, quoted in Dickinson, *Shall We Legislate*, 27.

15. *Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 1874; Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation," 123–25; Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 12–13. For an overview of child-labor legislation in the United States through the Civil War see Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 21–31. The provisions of the 1874 ten-hour act are quoted in their entirety in Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 113, and a complete list of changes made to the 1874 ten-hour law between 1874 and 1898 appears on pages 113–16.

16. Juravich et al., *Commonwealth of Toil*, 51–52; Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy*, xii–xvi, 3–37, 219–33.

17. Knights of Labor, District 30, *Record of Quarterly Proceedings*, 1886 –87; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 193.

18. *Commercial Bulletin*, 27 February 1886; Juravich et al., *Commonwealth of Toil*, 51–52; Knights of Labor, District 30, *Record of Quarterly Proceedings*, 1884–87. For a complete digest of labor-related acts and their provisions enacted in Massachusetts between 1883 and 1890, see Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 107–43.

19. Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, *Report of Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Session of the Federation*, 1884, 26; Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, *History of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor*, 14–15; Gary Fink, ed., *State Labor Proceedings*, x–xii. For an analysis of the Gompers-AFL political strategy in the 1880s and 1890s see Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics*, 48–70.

20. Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, *History of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor*, 23. For a complete listing of paid lobbyists to the Massachusetts legislature beginning in 1891, see Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lobbyist Section, Dockets of Legislative Agents, 1891–1986, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, Mass.

21. *Labor Leader*, 23 April 1892; Weil, "Usines en Ville," 300.

22. Florence Kelley, "Child Labor Legislation," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 20, no. 1, 163 (hereafter cited as *Annals*); Nelson, *Managers and Workers*, 138, 140; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 39–40, 101–2; Hearden, *Independence and Empire*, 99–100; Tone, *The Business of Benevolence*, 24–25.

23. Nelson, *Managers and Workers*, 149.

24. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 14, no. 15; *Commercial Bulletin*, 4 April 1891.

25. Hearden, *Independence and Empire*, 97–98; Copeland, *The Cotton Manufacturing Industry*, 221–24.

26. *Boston Journal of Commerce*, 23 December 1882, quoted in Hearden, *Independence and Empire*, 136.

27. *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1896, 129–53.

28. *Commercial Bulletin*, 19 January 1895; *NECMA Transactions*, Annual Meeting,

1900, 167–68. Regarding the importance of skill in creating a New England advantage over the South in fine-goods production during the 1890s see David Doane, "Regional Cost Differentials and Textile Location," 3–34, especially 22; and Fischbaum, "An Economic Analysis," 116–18.

29. Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, *Cotton Manufactures in Massachusetts and the Southern States*, 102–3; *NECMA Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1904, 84–85.

30. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 46, 51; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 39–40; Mary Oates, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 6–7; Chen, "Regional Differences in Costs and Productivity," 566.

31. Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 39–42; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 46; Copeland, *The Cotton Manufacturing Industry*, 70–73; McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 14–15.

32. *NECMA Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1905, 88; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 22–23; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 157, 169; Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 105. On the subject of skilled workers' control over the production process, see Montgomery, "Workers' Control of Machine Production in the Nineteenth Century," in *Workers' Control in America*, 9–31.

33. *Commercial Bulletin*, 13 November 1897.

34. From *Boston Journal of Commerce*, quoted in *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 26, no. 8.

35. Arkwright Club, *Report of the Committee on Southern Competition*, 3.

36. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 23, no. 16; *Commercial Bulletin*, 19 January 1895.

37. Arkwright Club, *Report of the Committee on Southern Competition*, 8, 6–7.

38. AFL, Massachusetts State Branch, *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention*, 1898, 13–14; *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 27, no. 2; Hearden, *Independence and Empire*, 88, 385–87. For an overview of AFL political activities at the national level before World War I, see Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics*.

39. *Springfield Republican*, 22 August 1893; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 160, 168, 175; *Davidson's Blue Book*, 1891, 78.

40. *Springfield Republican*, 22 August 1893.

41. Ibid., 9 May and 6 April 1874; Signed petition for old rate of wages to George Bedlow, Chicopee agent, April 1874, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MO–2, Folder 13. The textile industry utilized corporate titles that were used among merchant capitalists during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Within the management of textile corporations, the "treasurer" was one of the chief executives of the company, the "agent" was the person in charge of the operation of the mill(s), and the "superintendent" was an assistant to the agent, often in charge of coordinating day-to-day operations at the mill(s) and the person to whom department heads and overseers reported. Knowlton, *Pepperell's Progress*, 29.

42. *Springfield Republican*, 13, 16, and 30 April 1874; Gross, *The Course of Industrial Decline*, 89.

43. *Springfield Republican*, 23 April, 4 and 9 May 1874; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 188. On the back of the April 1874 mulespinners' petition to Agent Bedlow,

next to thirty-eight of the mulespinners' signatures were notations in pencil including the names of women, presumably company boardinghouse keepers, and the addresses of where the men lived.

44. *Springfield Republican*, 12 January 1876, 6 and 14 November 1878; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 181; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 100.

45. Signed Contracts, 1 December 1881 and 11 May 1883, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MO–2, Folder 13.

46. George Hills, Lymann Mills agent, to James Cumnock, Dwight Manufacturing Company Chicopee agent, 10 September 1885, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, ML-A, Folder 11; Testimony of Frank Foster, 8–9 and 12 February 1883, in U.S. Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Report of the Committee of the Senate*, vol. 1, 60–61, 79; *Labor Leader*, 19 March 1887.

47. *Springfield Republican*, 23 August and 5 September 1893.

48. Ibid., 5–6 September 1893.

49. Ibid., 6 September 1893.

50. Ibid., 9 and 18 September 1893.

51. Ibid., 1 August 1897. The Dwight Company continued to make small profits during 1893 and 1894. The Chicopee mill's gross profits for six months ending November 1893 were $91,558.91; for six months ending May 1894 the output of buildings 1, 2, 5, and 7 generated a gross profit of $92,061.09, but buildings 3 and 4 saw a gross loss of $11,059.62; for six months ending November 1895, the output from buildings 1, 2, 5, and 7 generated a gross profit of $115,507.49 while buildings 3 and 4 saw a gross loss of $26,462.56. Extant sources do not indicate whether or not the company paid its investors dividends over these years, but in all likelihood a sizeable amount of these gross profits were used to fund the construction of Dwight's southern branch mill. Journals, December 1891–November 1899, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, DB-9.

52. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 25, no. 8.

53. *Commercial Bulletin*, 19 January 1895.

54. Marvin Fischbaum argued that by World War I many northern textile mills that did not have southern branch plants had given up the manufacture of goods that competed directly with those made in the South unless "a trademark or superior finish" added a small amount to the value of the cloth on the market. See Fischbaum, "An Economic Analysis," 107–8.

55. *Commercial Bulletin*, 28 September 1894.

56. From *Acts and Resolves of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* in Registration Statements, Dwight Manufacturing Company, Industrial #3, Miscellaneous Corporate Items.

Three. "A Model Manufacturing Town": Moving to Alabama City

1. William Gregg, *Essays on Domestic Industry*, 230, quoted in Hearden, *Independence and Empire*, 11.

2. Miller, *The Cotton Mill Movement*, 2–4, 9–24, quoted selection from 106–7; Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South*, 138–45.

3. Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 3, 5; Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 27; Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South*, 139; Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 19; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 157.

4. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 12, no. 17.

5. *Journals of Alabama*, 1884–85; *Acts of Alabama*, 1886–87.

6. Riley, *Alabama as It Is*, iii–iv, 218.

7. Ibid., 19.

8. Ibid., 117, 119. Italics original.

9. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 12, no. 2. On the importance of publicity generated by civic boosters, see Wright, *Old South, New South*, 43; Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 4; Gaston, *The New South Creed*, 73.

10. Citizens of Gadsden, *Gadsden, Alabama*, 1–6; *Gadsden Times-News*, 3 May 1895. On the location of cotton mills and the validity of the "bring the cotton mills to the cotton fields" booster rhetoric see Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*, 46–49; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 43–44.

11. Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 57–61; Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 3–4; *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 12, no. 1.

12. Wright, *Old South, New South*, 135.

13. Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 1, 140–48, 165–68, 182–88; Fischbaum, "An Economic Analysis," 106–7. The *Manufacturers' Record* published articles discussing the investments of Massachusetts textile money in Alabama in vol. 35, no. 19 and vol. 37, no. 1.

14. Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism*, 9–23; Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 170; Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South*, 226–27; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 46. On populism in general see especially Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise*; McMath, *Populist Vanguard*; Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism.*

15. *Acts of Alabama*, 1892–93; *Journals of Alabama*, 1894–95; *Acts of Alabama*, 1896–97, 1901. See also Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism*, 138–39. For comparisons between tax exemptions granted to industries in New England from the 1700s through the Civil War and those passed in southern states after the war see Fischbaum, "An Economic Analysis," 134–68.

16. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 4 August 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2. See also Mitchell to Nichols, 27 June, 17 December, and 25 January 1898, and 3 April 1899.

17. *Gadsden Times-News*, 11 August 1899, 3 May 1895; Tax Schedule, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MO-4, cited in Weil, "Usines en Ville," 359, Table 40.

18. *Acts of Alabama*, 1886–87.

19. McLaurin, *The Knights of Labor in the South*, 39–50, 80–112, and *Paternalism and Protest*, 80–82; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 18–19; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 23–25; Pendleton, "New Deal Labor Policy," 2–3.

20. *Acts of Alabama*, 1888–89; McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 120; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 22; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 547; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 18–20.

21. *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 17; *Acts of Alabama*, 1890–91.

22. *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 17; Unidentified Newspaper Clipping, in Gadsden Industries (Textiles) Vertical File, Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Ala.; Howard, "Alabama City's Industrial Roots Run Deep," *Gadsden Times*, 20 June 1988, in Gadsden-Alabama City Vertical File, Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Ala.; Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 134–40. On Robert Kyle and the Gadsden Land and Development Company, see Weil, "Usines en Ville," 221–30.

23. *Gadsden Times-News*, 3 May 1895.

24. Ibid; Weil, "Usines en Ville," 216–17.

25. *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 66; Reuben A. Mitchell to John Howard Nichols, 2 November 1901, John Howard Nichols Papers, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard University, cited in Weil, "Usines en Ville," 301. For an extended discussion about William Oates and Alabama's 1894 gubernatorial election see Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 49–63.

26. *Journals of Alabama*, 1894–95; *Acts of Alabama*, 1894–95; *Gadsden Times-News*, 25 December 1894; Ashby quoted in Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 270. See also Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 20; Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 74–75; Perry, "Middle-Class Townsmen and Northern Capital," 171–73.

27. *Gadsden Times-News*, 3 May 1895. For an example of Oates's proindustrialization attitude, see William Oates, "Industrial Development of the South," *North American Review* 161 (November 1895): 566–74.

28. *Gadsden Times-News*, 7 January 1896.

29. Ibid., 26 March 1895, 11 August 1899; Broadside from Robert B. Kyle Papers, Alabama Department of History and Archives, Montgomery, Alabama, reproduced in Weil, "Usines en Ville," Figure 15, between pages 233 and 234. On views of town and regional progress see also Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 37, 46–49; Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*, 32–34.

30. *Gadsden Times-News*, 10 April 1903; Howard, "Alabama City's Industrial Roots Run Deep," *Gadsden Times*, 20 June 1988. The Alabama Steel and Wire Company was organized by Ohio capitalists in 1905, sold and renamed the Gulf States Steel Company in 1913, and in 1937 was acquired by Republic Steel.

31. *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 3–17. Regarding the land transaction, see Hoffman, "A Study of the United Textile Workers," 69.

32. *Davidson's Blue Book*, 1896, 47.

33. *Davidson's Blue Book*, 1895–96, 47, 69; *Gadsden Times-News*, 16 April 1895. Updates about the progress of the construction of Dwight's Alabama City mill appeared in *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 26, no. 24; vol. 26, no. 26; and vol. 28, no. 23.

34. *Gadsden Times-News*, 3 May 1895.

35. Profits for the six months ending November 1897 were $32,123.15 for the Alabama City mill and $38,839.09 for the Chicopee mill; profits for the six months ending May 1898

for the Alabama City mill were $54,072.29 and $47,297.95 for the Chicopee mill; profits for the six months ending November 1898 for the Alabama City mill were $58,181.90 and $48,202.95 for the Chicopee mill. Journals, December 1891–November 1899, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, DB-9.

36. Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 28 December 1897, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MK-3.

37. Testimony quoted in Whittelsey, *Massachusetts Labor Legislation*, 41; *Davidson's Blue Book*, 1904–5, 59, 93, and 1906–7, 53, 89–91.

38. *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 14 October 1899; *Gadsden Times-News*, 16 April 1895; Hoffman, "A Study of the United Textile Workers of America," 64; Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*, 88–89.

39. *Gadsden Times-News*, 3 May 1895; *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 14 May 1898. There is a vast amount of scholarship that analyzes the subjects of southern mill villages and paternalism. Much of the literature focuses on two broad questions: (1) What were the motivating factors behind the construction and maintenance of mill villages in the New South? (2) What was the nature of southern mill villages vis-à-vis managerial control and worker agency? For historiographic overviews see David Carlton, "Paternalism and Southern Textile Labor," in Fink and Reed, eds., *Race, Class, and Community*; Hall et al., "Afterword," in *Like a Family* (2000 reprint); Robert Zieger, "Textile Workers and Historians," in Zieger, ed., *Organized Labor in the Twentieth-Century South.*

40. This trend, as found in managerial relations at the turn of the century in North and South Carolina mills, is discussed in Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 91–92.

41. *NECMA Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1900, 170; *Gadsden Times-News*, 7 January 1896.

42. Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 360–61, n. 10. For examples of corporate paternalism found throughout the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism*; Brody, "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism," in *Workers in Industrial America*, 48–81; Nelson, *Managers and Workers*; Tone, *The Business of Benevolence.*

43. April 1896 letter quoted in *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 32; *Gadsden Times-News*, 7 January 1896; Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 27 June 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

44. *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 32–36; *Gadsden Times-News*, 22 May 1896, 25 May 1896, 26 June 1896; *Springfield Republican*, 22 May 1896 and 27 June 1896.

45. *Gadsden Times-News*, 26 June 1896. On worker responses to company philanthropy, see Hall et al., *Like a Family*; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*; Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South.*

46. *In Memoriam, Howard Gardner Nichols*, 45, 50, 57, 63–64, 66. Italics added to Mitchell quote.

47. Charles H. Moody, Alabama City superintendent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 3 July 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1; Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 2 July 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MK-3; Weil, "Usines en Ville," 237.

48. Osmon B. Tilton, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 11 July, 1 August, 25 and 26 September 1896; C. G. Montgomery, Alabama City manager, to Nichols, 28 December 1896; Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to Nichols, 16 January 1897, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1. See also, Weil, "Usines en Ville," 239–40.

49. Charles H. Moody, Alabama City superintendent, to Edward P. Nichols, assistant treasurer, 8 February 1897, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1; Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 27 June 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

50. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 16 June 1906. The paper published photographs of the village on 12, 13, 14, 26, 27 June, and 7 July 1906.

51. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 6; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 27–29; Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 5–6.

52. *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 11 December 1897; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 3–13.

53. Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, *Cotton Manufactures in Massachusetts and the Southern States*, 44–45; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 10; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 108–9; Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 115.

54. Osmon B. Tilton, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 31 October and 1 August 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1; *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 12 February 1898; *NECMA Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1900, 171.

55. *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 4 May 1901.

56. Burns Cox Interview Transcript, Uprising of '34 Collection, Series II, Subseries B, Box 2, Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University Library, Special Collections Department, Atlanta, Georgia (hereafter cited as Uprising of '34 Transcripts); *Gadsden Times*, "84-Year-Old Dwight Mills Coming Down," 3 June 1979 in Gadsden Industries (Textiles) Vertical File, Gadsden Public Library.

57. Dwight Manufacturing Company, *Alabama City*. Pictures that appeared in the pamphlet also appeared in the *Gadsden Daily Times-News* intermittently through June and July 1906.

58. Dwight Manufacturing Company, *Chicopee, Massachusetts: A Description of Working Conditions*, n.p., n.d.

59. Charles H. Moody, Alabama City superintendent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 14 and 24 December 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1; *Springfield Republican*, 3 May 1903.

60. Miscellany, Letters Regarding Labor Recruitment, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MA-67, and ML-A, Folders 6, 8, 9; Labor Letters, 1857–84, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MO-2, Folder 13.

61. Howard Gardner Nichols letters, 7, 9, and 10 August 1895, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MG-20; Howard Gardner Nichols, Incoming Correspondence, John Howard Nichols Papers, cited in Weil, "Usines en Ville," 276, n. 78; Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, *Cotton Manufactures in Massachusetts and the Southern States*, 50; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 74–77.

62. *Springfield Republican*, 2 May 1906; *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 13 August 1906; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 109–10; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 97.

63. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 21 March 1912; *Springfield Republican*, 22 May and 23 June 1914.

64. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 19 August 1898 and 21 November 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2. Hall et al., in *Like a Family*, 107, cited estimates that placed the "floating population" of all Piedmont textile mill workers at 20 to 40 percent. On moving as a resistance strategy for southern textile workers see Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 172–76; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 105–9.

65. Posted Notice, "Regulations to be Observed by All Persons Employed by the Dwight Manufacturing Company," Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, Springfield, Mass., reproduced in Weil, "Usines en Ville," Figure 22, between pp. 296 and 297.

66. *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 1 April 1899; Memo of Trips for Mill Help, 1913–20, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, HC-4; Miscellany, Letters Regarding Labor Recruitment, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, ML-A, Folder 6; Labor Letters, 1857–84, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MO-2, Folder 13.

67. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported on Foy's activities in the 4, 6, and 10 April 1896 editions of the paper, cited in Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 102; Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to Edward P. Nichols, assistant treasurer, 5 June 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

68. Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, *Cotton Manufactures in Massachusetts and the Southern States*, 55; *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 12 April 1906; *Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Labor: Wage Earners in the Cotton Textile Industry* (1911), excerpted in *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 7 September 1911. On the enticement of southern textile mill labor, see Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 108–9; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 105–13; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 101–5.

69. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 16 June 1906; Osmon B. Tilton, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 1 and 8 August 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1.

70. *Mobile Daily Register*, 18 May 1895, quoted in Kaufman et al., *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 4, 27; Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 11 March 1899, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2; *Gadsden Times-News*, 7 April 1899; Hoffman, "A Study of the United Textile Workers of America," 64.

Four. "Small Help": Unionization, Capital Mobility, and Child-Labor Laws in Alabama

1. Osmon B. Tilton, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 10 October 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1.

2. AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1895, 74.

3. See AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1896, 21. For overviews and in-depth discussions

of the founding of the National Union of Textile Workers and the union's history through 1901, see McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 120–77; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 36–51; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 7–9, 26–29; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 16–18.

4. McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 140, 150; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 16–17.

5. *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 12 November 1898; G. B. McCrackan to Sadie Middleton, Augusta Federation of Labor secretary, 14 April 1900, Mss117a, Series 11, File A, Box 47, Folder 21, American Federation of Labor Papers, 1888–1955, National (International) Union of Textile Workers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.

6. McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 50, 149–51.

7. AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1899, 107–8; Prince Greene, NUTW general secretary, to Samuel Gompers, AFL president, 31 December 1900; Greene to Frank Morrison, AFL secretary, 12 and 15 February 1901; James Duncan, NUTW vice president, to Gompers, 23 and 26 April and 17 May 1901, Mss117a, Series 11, File A, Box 47, Folder 21, American Federation of Labor Papers, 1888–1955, National (International) Union of Textile Workers; McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest*, 178–85; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 41–50; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 17–18.

8. Albert Hibbert, UTWA secretary, to Samuel Gompers, AFL president, 24 March 1903, in Kaufman et al., *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 6, 119; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 131–37; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 31–32. On skill as a basis of organization, see Brody, *Workers in Industrial America*; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*; DeVault, " 'To Sit Among Men,' " in Arnesen et al., eds., *Labor Histories*, 259–83.

9. *Springfield Republican*, 28 September 1903.

10. Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 52–81; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 19–21; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 1–5; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 169–70.

11. For recent treatments of the historiography of southern unionism, see Simon, "Rethinking Why," 465–84; Hall et al., "Afterword," in *Like a Family*.

12. Samuel Gompers to Jere Dennis, 23 September 1896, in Kaufman et al., *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 4, 232.

13. AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1896, 21; *American Federationist*, vol. 6, no. 6; *Springfield Republican*, 1 August 1897; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 496; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 56–57; McHugh, *Mill Family*, 38, 48; Hindman, *Child Labor*, 35–36, 155–60.

14. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 11 May 1897; and Osmon B. Tilton, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 31 October 1896, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1. On the use of the family-labor system as a way to create a stable core of operatives and to perpetuate a mill's workforce, see McHugh, *Mill Family*, especially 14–16, 24–29, 47–48; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 98–102; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 56–57.

15. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 38, no. 20; *Southern and Western Textile Excelsior*, 29 February 1896.

16. *Journals of Alabama*, 1896–97; Arkwright Club, *Report of the Committee on Southern Competition*, 1897, 3. See also Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 22–23.

17. *Journals of Alabama*, 1898–99; Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 5 December 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2. See also, Elizabeth Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 23.

18. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 10 December 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

19. Circular issued by Samuel Gompers, 23 January 1899, in Kaufman et al., *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 5, 70; *Labor Advocate*, 28 January 1899.

20. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 17 December 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2. Italics added.

21. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 10 and 17 December, and 24 February 1898, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2; *Journals of Alabama*, 1898–99.

22. AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1900, 67, 28. On Irene Ashby and the overall goals of her study, see Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 24–26; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 181.

23. Ashby, *Report to the Executive Committee*; *American Federationist*, vol. 8, no. 5; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 27–28; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 181; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 52.

24. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 39, no. 5; Edward Sanborn, "Factory Life in the South," quoted in *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 39, no. 5; Leonora Beck, "A Model Factory Town"; Few, "The Constructive Philanthropy"; Parker, "The South Carolina Cotton Mill." For additional analysis on arguments used by southern mill owners against child labor legislation, see Hindman, *Child Labor*, 53–57.

25. Samuel Gompers to Irene Ashby, 3 January 1901, in Kaufman et al., *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 5, 315.

26. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 39, no. 1; Samuel Gompers to Irene Ashby, 3 January 1901, in Kaufman et al., *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, vol. 5, 314; *American Federationist*, vol. 8, no. 5; Ashby, *Report to the Executive Committee of the State*; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 28–29, 31; Hindman, *Child Labor*, 170–71.

27. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xv–xvi, 25–33, 111; Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 213–14. For an overview of the rise of progressive reform in the early twentieth-century South, southern middle-class reformers, and their roles in and agendas for regional change, see Grantham; Hackney, 108–332; Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 409–37; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 1–32; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 369–428.

28. *Journals of Alabama*, 1900–1901; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 30; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 181.

29. *American Federationist*, vol. 8, no. 5; *Journals of Alabama*, 1900–1901; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 31–33; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 182. In an editorial published in the *New York Herald* and reprinted in *Labor Advocate* on 30 November

1901, Irene Ashby discussed Reuben A. Mitchell's testimony before the committee.

30. *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 39, no. 22. For a detailed discussion of Edgar Gardner Murphy's role in the founding of the Alabama Child Labor Committee, see Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, especially 31; and Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, especially 182.

31. *Commercial Bulletin*, 26 February 1910.

32. Reuben A. Mitchell, Alabama City agent, to J. Howard Nichols, treasurer, 11 May 1897, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-1. For examples of Dwight's public statements, see *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 25, no. 8 and vol. 26, no. 8; *Commercial Bulletin*, 28 September 1894 and 19 January 1895; *Gadsden Times-News*, 3 May 1895.

33. *American Federationist*, vol. 8, no. 5. Early analyses of child labor reform were dominated by a good-versus-evil paradigm, whereas literature written since the 1980s presents a more complicated picture of reform efforts and of the attitudes and motivations of reformers, mill workers, and managers alike. Early studies include Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation* and Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*. Recent works addressing the child labor reform issue include Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*; Hall et al., *Like a Family*; McHugh, *Mill Family*; Flynt, *Poor but Proud*; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*; Hindman, *Child Labor*; Sallee, *The Whiteness of Child Labor Reform*.

34. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 185; Hindman, *Child Labor*, 166–70.

35. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 23 October 1901.

36. Ibid., 30 October 1901.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 15 December 1901. The Alabama Child Labor Committee published and distributed the Murphy editorial and the ensuing debate between Murphy, Nichols, and Sears in pamphlet form as *Child Labor in Alabama, A Correspondence*. Additional pamphlets written by Edgar Gardner Murphy and published by the Alabama Child Labor Committee in 1902 included *Pictures from the Mills*; *The South and Her Children*; *Child Labor Legislation*; and *A Child Labor Law, Why Legislation Is Better Than "Voluntary Agreement" of Mills*. For an overview of the arguments forwarded in each, see Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 38–40. On the Murphy-Nichols-Sears correspondences specifically, see Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 33–36; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 182–83; Sallee, *The Whiteness of Child Labor Reform*, 88–89.

39. *American Federationist*, vol. 9, no. 1; *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 42, no. 6. See also Sallee, *The Whiteness of Child Labor Reform*, especially 92–113.

40. *Labor Advocate*, 13 December 1902.

41. Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 31–33; Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 239–47.

42. *Journals of Alabama*, 1903; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 47–50; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 185.

43. *Annals*, vol. 21, no. 2; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xvi, 34.

44. *Labor Advocate*, 24 January 1903; *Manufacturers' Record*, vol. 43, no. 3.

45. *Acts of Alabama*, 1903; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 49–51.

46. Edith Reeves, "The Labor Laws of Massachusetts, 1902–10," in Kingsbury, ed., *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, 311–14, 323–25; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 10, 47.

47. Neal Anderson, "Child Labor Legislation in the South," in *Annals*, vol. 25, no. 3, 494–95, 497–98; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 275; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 80.

48. *The Liberator* (formerly *Labor Leader*), vol. 33, no. 9; Alexander McKelway, "Child Labor in the Southern Cotton Mills," in *Annals*, vol. 27, no. 2, 265; *Gadsden Times-News*, 17 April 1903.

49. Van Vorst, *The Cry of the Children*, 50. The exposé originally appeared as a series of articles and explicitly discussed other cotton textile companies, as well as the Dwight Company.

50. Ibid., 53, 60.

51. Ibid., 56–57, 102–3.

52. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 13 April 1906; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 496. On the practice of concealing underage children in mills see Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 12–13; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 190.

53. See also Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 493–516; Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*, 173–209; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 62–63; Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 191.

54. *Montgomery Advertiser*, 29 June 1906, quoted in Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 216, and in Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 277; *Labor Advocate*, 20 January 1906; Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Convention Proceedings*, 1906, 20–21; Hackney, 244–48, 256–87.

55. Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 259–61, 284; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 49.

56. Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Convention Proceedings*, 1907, 24, 43; *Journals of Alabama*, 1907; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 218–19.

57. Murphy, *The Child Labor Question in Alabama*, 6. Italics original.

58. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 18 July 1907; *Acts of Alabama*, 1907.

59. *Acts of Alabama*, 1907. Italics added. The original bill proposed twelve weeks of school attendance and a maximum workweek of fifty-four hours.

60. *Labor Advocate*, 9 August 1907; Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Convention Proceedings*, 1908, 24.

61. *Acts of Alabama*, 1909 (special session); *Journals of Alabama*, 1911; *Labor Advocate*, 22 September 1911. On the political implications of a weak union base in the South, see Simon, "Rethinking Why There Are So Few Unions in the South," 482.

62. National Child Labor Committee, *What State Laws and the Federal Census Say about Child Labor*; *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 20 May 1912; W. H. Oates, *Children Eligible for Employment . . . in 1912*, cited in Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 226–27.

63. National Child Labor Committee, *Child Labor and Poverty*, 125, 128; Caleb S. Wilkinson, Alabama City agent, to Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, 10 December 1914, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MM-5.

64. *Acts of Alabama*, 1915.

65. Ibid., 1915 and 1919; Alabama Sate Federation of Labor, *Report on Labor Legislation and Labor Record of Senators and Members of the House*; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 231–37; Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 28–41.

66. Hindman, *Child Labor*, 52–58, 64; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 10–12, 70; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 362; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 123–24.

67. Hindman, *Child Labor*, 64–72, 74–77; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 87–92, 95–98, 119–42, 165–85; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 350–70; Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 130–39, 250–68.

68. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics and Labor, *Cotton Manufactures in Massachusetts and the Southern States*, 101–2; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 59–60; Hindman, *Child Labor*, 73. On southern educational standards and literacy rates, see Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 256–58. For a brief overview of the reduction of children in southern textile mills by 1920 and a digest of child labor regulations enacted in Alabama, North and South Carolina, and Georgia beginning in 1903, see Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, 273–78; Hindman, *Child Labor*, 183–86.

Five. "A General Demoralization of Business": The Textile Depression of the 1920s

1. *Textile Manufacturer*, 14 January 1916; *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 10 January 1916.

2. National Association of Cotton Manufacturers, *Transactions of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1911, 45 (hereafter cited as *NACM Transactions*); *Springfield Republican*, 25 July 1914.

3. The Dwight Manufacturing Company's Alabama City mill made a net profit of $69,631.15 and the Chicopee mill registered a net loss of $7,503.67 for the eighteen months ending May 1915. The company's total net profit was $62,127.48. Journals, June 1911–May 1919, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, DB-11.

4. *Springfield Republican*, 14 April 1916. The Dwight Manufacturing Company razed three of its seven production buildings in Chicopee, rebuilding and retooling two of them.

5. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 10 January 1916, 9 June and 28 July 1917, 3 June 1918, 5 August 1919, 14 June and 31 August 1920; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 30 September 1920; Contracts, QM Corps, U.S. Army, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, DO-3. For an overview of how World War I impacted production and profits in the textile industry, see Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 31–38; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 56–59; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 183–84, 195–96.

6. Profits for the Dwight Company's mills between December 1916 and May 1920 at six-month intervals were $43,954.86 in Chicopee and $124,046.84 in Alabama City (May 1916); $98,265.46 in Chicopee and $85,659.88 in Alabama City (November 1916); $185,315.51 in Chicopee and $119,083.65 in Alabama City (May 1917); $119,502.19 in Chicopee and $224,125.35 in Alabama City (November 1917); $265,695.48 in Chicopee and $126,227.45 in Alabama City (May 1918); $87,099.68 in Chicopee and $126,197.09 in Alabama City (November 1918); $70,661.36 in Chicopee and $239,298.88 in Alabama City (May 1919); $151,189.48 in Chicopee and $513,498.65 in Alabama City (November 1919);

$124,632.01 in Chicopee and $698,981.38 in Alabama City (May 1920). Journals, June 1911–May 1919 and June 1919–August 1927, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, DB-11 and DB-12.

7. Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 137–39; McCartin, *Labor's Great War*, 166–67.

8. Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 21; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 330–410; Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*, 59–77; McCartin, *Labor's Great War*, especially 38–172; James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State*, 214–54.

9. Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, *History of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor*, 82–97; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 186–87; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 19–20; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 32–42.

10. Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, to Ernest Lovering, treasurer, 26 February 1919, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MK-5. For an overview of the IWW and the organization's activities during World War I see Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, especially chapters 14–17; Bird et al., *Solidarity Forever*; Goldberg, *A Tale of Three Cities*.

11. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 3 September 1920; John Golden, UTWA president, to Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, 10 March 1915; and Aumann to Golden, 16 September 1915, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MP-5, Folder 9.

12. Paul Seabury, *The Waning of Southern "Internationalism,"* quoted in Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 56; *NACM Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1919, 195–96.

13. Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 1–3; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 184–90; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 51–53; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 37; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*, 44–45; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 56–57.

14. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 18 May, 13 September, and 22 December 1920; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 20 May and 12 August 1920.

15. The Dwight Manufacturing Company's net profits for the six months ending May 1920 were $698,981.38 for the Alabama City mill and $124,632.01 for the Chicopee mill, for a total net profit of $823,613.39. For the six months ending November 1920 the company's net losses were $413,206.10 for the Alabama City mill and $1,095,543.57 for the mill in Chicopee. The total loss over the six-month period was $1,508,749.67. Journals, June 1919–August 1927, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, DB-12.

16. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 22 December 1920; Wage Schedules, 1910–20, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MP-5, Folder 1; *Textile Worker*, January 1921.

17. Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, to Ernest Lovering, treasurer, 31 January 1921, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MK-5; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 23 June 1921; *Gadsden Daily-Times News*, 11 June and 20 July 1921.

18. *Textile Worker*, January and August 1921; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 187–96; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*, 43–44; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 58–59; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 26–27.

19. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 10 and 13 October 1921.

20. Ibid., 2, 4, and 8 November 1921.

21. Ibid., 7 November 1921.

22. Ibid., 9 November 1921.

23. Ibid., 24 November and 1 and 2 December 1921. Two examples of the eviction notices given to fired workers appeared in the 24 November edition.

24. Ibid., 4 January 1922; *Textile Worker*, April and May 1922. On the 1922 New England textile strike, see Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 196–97; Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, 310–37; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 22; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 74–75.

25. Louis A. Aumann, Chicopee agent, to Ernest Lovering, treasurer, 2 and 16 February 1922, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MP-5, Folder 1.

26. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 25 February 1922.

27. Ibid., 19 April 1922.

28. Ibid., 19, 20, and 25 April 1922.

29. Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 406; AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1921, 21, and 1923, 345; On the postwar open-shop drive in Alabama during the 1920s see Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 51–59, and on the open-shop drive nationwide, see Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 84–97.

30. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 13 June 1922, 13 December 1924.

31. Ibid., 11–13, 18–19, 25–26 October, and 2 November 1923.

32. Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Convention Proceedings*, 1924, 18–19; *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 2 November 1923; Cobb, *The Selling of the South*, 64–70.

33. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 9 November 1923.

34. Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Proceedings of Executive Board and Report of Officers, and Financial Statement*, 1923, 21; Martin, "Southern Labor Relations in Transition," 547.

35. *Manufacturers' Record*, quoted in Blanshard, *Labor in Southern Cotton Mills*, 74; Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 84; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 406.

36. Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 25. See also Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 334–38; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 190–97, 266; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*, 50; and Simon, "Rethinking Why," 476. On the movement of southern farmers off the land during the 1920s, see Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, Chapter 5.

37. *Textile Worker*, July 1922; Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 102; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 221. Resolutions regarding the organization of southern textile workers appeared yearly beginning in 1921. See AFL, *Convention Proceedings*; UTWA, *Convention Proceedings*.

38. Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 145–46, 280; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 21.

39. In Massachusetts mills, the cost of cloth production was $.2893 per pound compared to $.1925 per pound in southern mills. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries, *Report of a Special Investigation*, 2, 11; Massachusetts Industrial Commission, *Report of an Investigation*, 14, 44; Feller, "The Diffusion and Location," 581; Wright, "Cheap Labor and Southern Textiles," 619–27.

40. *NACM Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1923, 204–05; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 14 December 1922, 11 January and 6 September 1923; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 75–76.

41. Edmonds, *Cotton Mill Labor Conditions*, 6; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 31–33; Cumbler, *Working-Class Community in Industrial America*, 138–39.

42. *NACM Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1922, 289–90, 292; Koistinen, "Dealing With Deindustrialization," 136–37; John Golden, UTWA president, to Frank Morrison, UTWA treasurer, 26 February 1919, American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers Papers, Reel 42 (microfilm); Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 139–40; Goldberg, *A Tale of Three Cities*, 15–18; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 333.

43. *American Cotton and Wool Reporter*, quoted in *Textile Worker*, August 1922; *Commercial Bulletin*, 6 January 1923. For a complete listing of paid lobbyists to the Massachusetts legislature, see Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lobbyist Section, Dockets of Legislative Agents, 1891–1986.

44. *Textile Worker*, January 1923; *American Federationist*, vol. 30, no. 1; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Proceedings of the General Assembly*, 1923, 1924, 1927, 1928; Massachusetts Industrial Commission, *Report of an Investigation*, 69; Koistinen, "Dealing with Deindustrialization," 104–8, 116–30.

45. *Springfield Republican*, 28 January 1925. Communications between Chicopee superintendent J. F. Batchelor and Alabama City agent Caleb S. Wilkinson were ongoing throughout the strike. See Alabama Agent to Treasurer Letter Book, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

46. *Springfield Republican*, 28 January 1925.

47. Most AFTO locals eventually transferred their affiliations back to the UTWA between 1923 and 1926. Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 182–214, especially 184–96.

48. *Springfield Republican*, 1 February 1925.

49. Ibid., 28 January 1925.

50. Ibid., 31 January, 2 and 25 February 1925.

51. J. F. Batchelor, Chicopee superintendent, to Caleb S. Wilkinson, Alabama City agent, 4 March 1925, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

52. *Springfield Republican*, 11 March 1925; J. F. Batchelor, Chicopee superintendent, to Caleb S. Wilkinson, Alabama City agent, 31 March 1925; and Wilkinson to Batchelor, 2 April 1925, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2.

53. *Springfield Republican*, 1 April 1925; J. F. Batchelor, Chicopee superintendent, to Caleb S. Wilkinson, Alabama City agent, 2 April 1925, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MH-2. The Massachusetts legislature created the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration in 1886. It had the power to intervene in labor disputes in Massachusetts businesses employing over twenty-five persons. No official records of the 1925 Dwight strike remain in the papers of the Board. For applications, dockets, minutes, and decisions of other Massachusetts strikes submitted for arbitration, see Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Board of Conciliation and Arbitration, Dockets, Hearings, Minutes, and Decisions.

54. *Commercial Bulletin*, 6 January 1923; Notice of Special Stockholders Meeting, 10 April 1925, Miscellaneous Corporate Items, Dwight Manufacturing Company, Industrial #4. Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

55. George Nutting, clerk of corporation, to "the Stockholders of Dwight Manufacturing Company," 16 June 1925, Miscellaneous Corporate Items, Dwight Manufacturing Company, Industrial #4. The net loss of the Chicopee mill 1917–24 was $27,506.43 and the Alabama City profit over the same period was $2,382,589.53. The last year in which the Chicopee mill registered an annual profit was 1919.

56. *Gadsden Daily Times-News*, 19 November 1925; George Nichols, treasurer, to Allan Little, Alabama City agent, 16 February 1926, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, ME-1.

57. George Nichols, treasurer, to "the Stockholders of Dwight Manufacturing Company," 27 October 1926, Miscellaneous Corporate Items, Dwight Manufacturing Company, Industrial #4. Chicopee losses from December 1925 through November 1926 amounted to $306,749.35.

58. George Nichols, treasurer, to Allan Little, Alabama City agent, 8 January 1926, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, ME-1.

59. James Thompson, assistant treasurer, to J. F. Batchelor, Chicopee superintendent, 2 June 1927, Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection, MG-34; *Springfield Republican*, 1 July 1927. Numerous letters and railroad shipping receipts documenting the movement of machinery from the Massachusetts mills to Alabama City are located in the Dwight Manufacturing Company Collection. The bulk are located in Treasurer to Agent, Agent's Copies, 1924–27, MG-34; Agent to Treasurer, Treasurer's Copies, 1924–25, 1927, MK-6; and Miscellany to Agent, Second Series, 1927–28, MM-12.

60. Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Statistics, *Record of Cotton Mills*, 11; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 131–34; Plourde-Barker, *Chicopee*, 51; Blewett, *The Last Generation*, 8.

61. Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 229; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 131–32.

62. Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 229; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 131–32; Lumpkin, *Shutdowns in the Connecticut Valley*, 160.

63. *Springfield Republican*, 12 March 1917; Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town*, 229–31; Szetela, *History of Chicopee*, 131–34.

64. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 197; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 75; James Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 12, 18. Hodges noted that between 1926 and 1932 fewer than half of southern mills paid regular dividends.

65. Massachusetts Industrial Commission, *Report of an Investigation*, 5, 68 (irregular pagination); Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Statistics, *Record of Cotton Mills*, 1. The closed mills with southern branches included the Dwight Manufacturing Company and its subsidiary the Essex Cotton Mills, Bay State Cotton Mills, New England Southern Mills (Lowell Division), International Cotton Mills, American Tire Fabric Company, Firestone Mills, Massachusetts Cotton Mills, Beaver Mills, Beacon Manufacturing Company, and Gagner Manufacturing Company. The report does not indicate whether or not the owners of the closed mills without southern branches reinvested in the South or got out of the textile industry all together. The

largest of the mills without southern branches that closed included the Lancaster Mills (101,000 spindles), Lymann Mills (123,000 spindles), Manomet Mills (318,000 spindles), Fairhaven Mills (155,000 spindles), Sharp Manufacturing Company (200,000 spindles), Everett Mills (143,000 spindles), and Hamilton Manufacturing Company (160,000 spindles). The Nashua Manufacturing Company acquired the Tremont and Suffolk Mills of Lowell and downsized it from 223,000 to 40,000 spindles during the same time period. For averages of idle spindles by state, 1921–35, see Mary Oates, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry*, 200.

66. *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 10 November 1932.

67. *NACM Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1926, 46, and Semi-Annual Meeting, 1928, 148; *Textile Worker*, November 1927.

Six. "Dissatisfaction among Labor": The 1934 General Strike

1. Adamic, "Tragic Towns of New England," 748.

2. *Textile Worker*, April 1923; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 140–43; Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 10–11.

3. *Textile Worker*, March 1930; Trepp, "Union-Management Cooperation," 616–17; AFL, *Convention Proceedings*, 1930, 86–87.

4. *Textile Worker*, September 1925; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 29–30.

5. Massachusetts Industrial Commission, *Report of an Investigation*, 148; *Textile Worker*, February 1928; Tippett, *When Southern Labor Stirs*; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 201–17; Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 12–32; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 339–43; Hall, "Disorderly Women," 354–82; Hodges, "Challenge to the New South," 343–57; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 30–35.

6. Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Convention Proceedings*, 1928, 61, and 1929, 119.

7. Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 33–34; Trepp, "Union-Management Cooperation," 612–13; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 375; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 145–46.

8. Page, *Southern Cotton Mills and Labor*; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 214–15; Trepp, "Union-Management Cooperation," 613–19; Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 34; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 35; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 375–76; Brown, *Industrial Survey of Southern Textile Area.*

9. *Textile Worker*, June–November 1930; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 9 January 1930; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 32; Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 35; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 35–37; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers Union," 147; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 38–40.

10. Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 35; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 376.

11. Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 36–41; Trepp, "Union-Management Cooperation," 620–24; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 217–19, 235–36; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 37; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 377; George Sinclair Mitchell, *Textile Unionism and the South*, 81–82; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers Union," 147–48.

12. Adamic, "Tragic Towns of New England," 748; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 45; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 18; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 37; Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, 41, 255–56.

13. *NACM Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1923, 76–77. On the causes of overproduction, see Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 184–90; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 18; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 51–53.

14. *Commercial Bulletin*, 17 July 1926; *NACM Transactions*, Semi-Annual Meeting, 1927, 131–32.

15. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 362–63; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 18–19, 47–48; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 55–56.

16. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 362; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 19; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 55–56.

17. Massachusetts Industrial Commission, *Report of an Investigation*, 22; Irons, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 49; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 27.

18. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 289–92; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 433–34; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 56–62; Tomlins, *The State and the Unions*, 104–8; Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*, 111–13; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 28–29; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal*, especially 41–142.

19. Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 52–54; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 433–35; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 62.

20. Eula McGill Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 435; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 54; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 289; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 29–30; Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*, 36–37.

21. *Gadsden Times*, 3 April 1934; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 56–57; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 436.

22. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 298; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 56–58; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 436–38.

23. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 298–99; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 57; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 64.

24. *Gadsden Times*, 11 May 1933; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 18 May 1933; Lena Clayton to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 19 July 1933; H. S. Busy to Hugh Johnson, 1 August 1933; and Margaret Pearson to Hugh Johnson, 6 August 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, E398, Records of the National Recovery Administration, RG9. Hereafter cited as Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records. All spelling and punctuation in the cited passages have been retained from the original.

25. H. S. Busy to Hugh Johnson, 1 August 1933; and H. C. Bell to Hugh Johnson, 26 September 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 65, 69; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 292–95, 298–300; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*, 90–96.

26. Affidavits and Sworn Statements; W. A. Pepper to Hugh Johnson, 25 July 1933; and Georgia Thurman to L. R. Gilbert, Cotton Textile National Industrial Relations Board secretary, 5 September 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records.

27. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 304; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 61; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 100; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 60.

28. *Gadsden Times*, 13 July 1932; "Jerry's Drugstore" Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 331.

29. Alabama State Federation of Labor, *Convention Proceedings*, 1934, 20. On organizing under Section 7(a) at Goodyear and Gulf States Steel, see Martin, "Southern Labor Relations in Transition," 548–49.

30. Burns Cox Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2.

31. Ibid.; Sworn Statement by Denton Taylor to Thomas Callan, notary public, Gadsden, Ala., 15 September 1933; A. A. Sewall, UTWA Local 1878 secretary-treasurer, to L. R. Gilbert, National Cotton Textile Industrial Relations Board secretary, 28 October 1933; and Sworn Statement by Emory Smith to Ann Clark, notary public, Gadsden, Ala., 20 November 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records.

32. Sworn Statement by Susie Reed to Ann Clark, notary public, Gadsden, Ala., 20 November 1933; Sworn Statement by William McCain to Thomas Callan, notary public, Gadsden, Ala., 16 September 1933; and Sworn Statement by J. W. Carter to Ann Clark, notary public, Gadsden, Ala., 21 November 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records. For examples of code violations in North and South Carolina mills, see Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 293–307.

33. Eula McGill Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 1. On the Bruere Board and the Cotton Textile Code bureaucracy, see Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 64–70; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 79–84; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 32–35.

34. Report Regarding Complaint Against Dwight Manufacturing Company, Investigated by E. O. Fitzsimmons, 11 January 1934, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 70–72.

35. See, for example, Reports Regarding Complaint Against Dwight Manufacturing Company, Investigated by E. O. Fitzsimmons, 20 October 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records. Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 325; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 70–72.

36. W. L. Hilton to Hugh Johnson, 23 September 1933, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 307–8; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*, 98–108; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 85–88; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 73–78; Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*, 37–50.

37. *Gadsden Times*, 2, 3, and 6 June 1934; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 87–88; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 107–8; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 37–40.

38. Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 96.

39. *Gadsden Times*, 10 July 1934; Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 78–79; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 40.

40. *Gadsden Times*, 12 July 1934; P. O. Davis, Alabama Cotton Textile Industrial Relations Board chairman, to Robert Bruere, Cotton Textile National Industrial Relations Board chairman, 14 July 1934; and Robert Bruere to Thomas McMahon, UTWA president, 14 July 1934, Dwight Manufacturing Company Folder, NRA Records.

41. *Gadsden Times*, 12 and 14 July 1934.

42. Ibid., 18 and 28 July 1934; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 96; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 114.

43. *Gadsden Times*, 16 August 1934; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 98–100; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 118–19; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 328–29; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 48; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, 66–67; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 40–43.

44. *Gadsden Times*, 3 September 1934; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 193.

45. Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*, 53. Recent scholarship engaging with the local and intraregional dimensions of the 1934 textile strike includes Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 328–50; Douglas Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 199–204; Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat*, 109–22; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 120–39; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 105–12; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, 49–85; and Waldrep, 53–85.

46. Grady Kilgro Interview, Melton Ballard Interview, and Burns Cox Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; *Gadsden Times*, 14 July 1934; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 135–38.

47. Burns Cox Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 81; Hoffman, "A Study of the United Textile Workers of America," 264–89; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 108–12; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 142–47; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 349–50; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 512–13. For numbers of millhands participating in the strike in the South and New England, see Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 72, 83, 120.

48. *Gadsden Times*, 22 September 1934; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 112–16; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 152–53; Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934*, 77–79; Brooks, "The United Textile Workers of America," 389–90.

49. Grady Kilgro Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2.

50. *Gadsden Times*, 23 and 24 September 1934; Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 331.

51. Burns Cox Interview, Laura Beard Interview, and Grady Kilgro Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; *Gadsden Times*, 26 September 1934.

52. Laura Beard Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; *Gadsden Times*, 7, 8, 12, 15, and 21 November 1934.

53. *NACM Transactions*, Annual Meeting, 1934, 101, 115; *Southern Textile Bulletin*, 11 October 1934.

54. Grady Kilgro Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; UTWA, *Convention Proceedings*, 1936, 8; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 124, 130; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, 80–81; Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*, 71–80.

55. Clyde Ware Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 122–25; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 154–58; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 52–53; Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 350–53; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 203–8.

Seven. "We Kept Right on Organizin' ": From Defeat to Victory and Back Again

1. TWUA, *Convention Proceedings*, 1943, 121–22.

2. Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 55–70; Zieger, *The*

CIO, 64–70, 75, 125–29; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 37–39; Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor*, 3–11.

3. Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*, 114–42, quoted selection from 131; Tomlins, *The State and the Unions*, 120–89; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 126, 141–43.

4. Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 150–51; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 41–45; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 93.

5. Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 157–76; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 71–95; Zieger, *The CIO*, 74–81; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 40–57.

6. Burns Cox Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; Irons, *Testing the New Deal*, 162; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 59; Taft, *Organizing Dixie*, 74.

7. Official Report of Proceedings Before the National Labor Relations Board in the Matter of Dwight Manufacturing Company and Local No. 1878, United Textile Workers of America, National Labor Relations Board, RG25, Box 156–57 (document hereafter cited as Official Report of Proceedings; collection hereafter cited as NLRB Records); Burns Cox Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2.

8. Memorandum from Charles N. Feidelson, 11 November 1935, NLRB Records, Box 115.

9. Official Report of Proceedings, NLRB Records, Box 156–57; Decision Statement of Case in the Matter of *Dwight Manufacturing Company v. Local 1878, UTWA*, NLRB Records, Box 115 (hereafter cited as Decision Statement); *Gadsden Times*, 6–7 January 1936.

10. Official Report of Proceedings, NLRB Records, Box 115; Decision Statement, NLRB Records, Box 156–57; *Gadsden Times*, 3 and 5 January, and 11 March 1936.

11. Thomas I. Emerson to Charles Fahy, National Labor Relations Board general counsel, 29 November 1935; and Allan Little, Summary Statement Made in Deposition, 15 April 1936, NLRB Records, Box 115.

12. Respondent Brief in Case of *United States of America, National Labor Relations Board v. Dwight Manufacturing Company and Allen Little, Agent*, District Court of the United States for the Northern District of Alabama, NLRB Records, Box 115.

13. Decision Statement, NLRB Records, Box 115.

14. *Gadsden Times*, 22 April 1936; Martin, "Southern Labor Relations in Transition," 545–68, especially 550–54.

15. *Gadsden Times*, 26 April and 4 August 1936. Coverage of Appreciation Week, including profiles of Goodyear, Gulf States Steel, and the Dwight Manufacturing Company appeared in the paper throughout the week from Sunday, 26 April to Saturday, 2 May 1936.

16. Maxwell Stewart, *The Nation*, 17 July 1937, 69, quoted in Hoffman, "A Study of the United Textile Workers of America," 3, n. 3, and in Martin, "Southern Labor Relations in Transition," 547; Order in the Matter of Dwight Manufacturing Company and Local No. 1878, United Textile Workers of America, 20 October 1939, NLRB Records, Box 115; Martin, "Southern Labor Relations in Transition," 550; Clark *Like Night and Day*, 33.

17. TWUA, *Convention Proceedings*, 1939, 209; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 176–78; Clark, *Like Night and Day*, 33; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 129–33.

18. Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 45–46; Zieger, *The CIO*, 164–95. On the development of the National War Labor Board, see Lichtenstein, 44–66.

19. Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 79–81, quoted selection from xxi; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 159–60; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 137–38; Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 16.

20. Howard F. LeBaron, National Labor Relations Board Tenth Region director, to Oscar S. Smith, Field Division director, undated memorandum, NLRB Records, Box 3210.

21. Laura Beard Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; Howard F. LeBaron, National Labor Relations Board Tenth Region director, to Oscar S. Smith, Field Division director, undated memorandum, NLRB Records, Box 3210; Intermediate Report, Statement of Case in the Matter of *Dwight Manufacturing Company v. Textile Workers Union of America, CIO*, NLRB Records, Box 3210. Hereafter cited as Intermediate Report.

22. Hilburn Garrett Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcript, Box 2.

23. I. H. Atkins to Harry A. Millis, NLRB chairman, 9 January 1943, NLRB Records, Box 3210; Dwight Manufacturing Company, "Rules for the Guidance of Employees," in Don McKee Papers; Intermediate Report, NLRB Records, Box 3210.

24. Testimony and Official Report of Proceedings Before the National Labor Relations Board in the Matter of Dwight Manufacturing Company and Textile Workers Union of America, 8 February–24 March 1943, NLRB Records, Box 3618 and 3676 (hereafter cited as Testimony and Official Report); *Gadsden Times*, 9 April 1943.

25. Decision and Order, Statement of Case in the Matter of *Dwight Manufacturing Company v. Textile Workers Union of America, CIO*, n.d., NLRB Records, Box 115; Intermediate Report, NLRB Records, Box 3210.

26. Decision and Order, Statement of Case in the Matter of *Dwight Manufacturing Company v. Textile Workers Union of America, CIO*, n.d., NLRB Records, Box 115; Intermediate Report, NLRB Records, Box 3210; Testimony and Official Report, NLRB Records, Box 3618 and 3676. Charles Martin emphasized the importance of changed "community attitudes" toward organized labor in the union victories at Dwight, Goodyear, and Gulf States Steel, noting that they "were less hostile than before, perhaps because city officials now feared that the town's antilabor reputation might prevent it from receiving its share of war contracts." On the wartime organization of Goodyear and Gulf States Steel, see Martin, "Southern Labor Relations in Transition," 558–62, quoted selection from 561.

27. Hilburn Garrett Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; "Another Bitterly Anti-Union Stronghold Falls," *(Birmingham) News Digest*, 15 April 1943, Don McKee Papers; Report on Ordered Election, *Dwight Manufacturing Company v. TWUA, Affiliated with CIO*, 23 April 1943, NLRB Records, Box 3210; *Gadsden Times*, 25 April 1943.

28. Case Digest, Case Number 111–2527D (Dwight Manufacturing Company and Textile Workers Union of America, CIO), National War Labor Board, Region IV, Dispute

Case Files, RG202, Box 2321. Document hereafter cited as Case Digest; collection hereafter cited as NWLB Files.

29. H. S. Williams, Alabama State TWUA director, to Paul Styles, Disputes Division director, National War Labor Board, Region IV, 5 October 1943, NWLB Files, Box 2321. On threatened wildcat strikes throughout the country, see Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 7, 110–35, 157–77; Zieger, *The CIO*, 150–51.

30. The Dwight Company ignored directives issued by the National War Labor Board on 24 December 1943, 10 February 1944, and by the NWLB Region IV office in Atlanta on 21 April 1944. Leonard Berlinger, National War Labor Board Disputes Division acting director, to Paul Guthrie, National War Labor Board, Region IV Division Disputes director, 14 July 1944, NWLB Files, Box 2321; Zieger, *The CIO*, 166–70; Clark, *Like Night and Day*, 36.

31. Telegram from Paul Wilson, TWUA Local 576 president, to T. Van Hecke, National War Labor Board, Region IV chairman, 18 June 1944, NWLB Files, Box 2321. For additional correspondences relating to threatened work stoppages, see H. S. Williams to Paul Styles, 2 December 1943; James Wilson to Styles, 2 December 1943; A. R. Marshall to Paul Styles, 31 January 1944; Frank Stout to Paul Styles, 17 March 1944; H. M. Garrett, TWUA Local 576 secretary, to Paul Guthrie, National War Labor Board, Region IV Disputes director, 9 June 1944.

32. Leonard Berlinger to Paul Guthrie, 14 and 20 July 1944; and Case Digest, NWLB Files, Box 2321.

33. Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 229; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 138–39; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 536–38; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 127–29; Koistinen, "Dealing With Deindustrialization," 180–94. On the development of the National War Labor Board's wage policies and the TWUA's attempts to use the NWLB apparatus to achieve regional wage parity, see Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 71–81, 110–35, 210–16; and Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 183–212. On attempts to equalize North-South textile industry standards through federal legislation before the passage of the FLSA in 1938, see Hodges, 135–36; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 64–65; Koistinen, 159–65, 172–80.

34. Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 1, 15–17; Zieger, *The CIO*, 146; Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor*, 13–14, 20; Richards, "The History of the Textile Workers Union of America," 163–69; Clark, *Like Night and Day*, 35–44.

35. Wright, *Old South, New South*, 219; Cobb, *Selling the South*, 115; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 138–39, 182–89; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, 83.

36. Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor*, especially 20–138; Zieger, *The CIO*, 227–41; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 154–81; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 521–23; Michael Goldfield, "The Failure of Operation Dixie," in Fink and Reed, eds., *Race, Class, and Community*, 166–89; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, 141–48.

37. Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor*, 162; Zieger, *The CIO*, 240–51; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 182–83; Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 238–39; Flamming, *Creating the*

Modern South, 248, 253, 288; Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness*, 151, 164; Cobb, *Selling the South*, 100–1; U.S. Department of Labor, *State Right-to-Work Laws*.

38. Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 136; Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 49–52.

39. Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1951.

40. Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 99–102; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 211–13; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 135–36.

41. Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 105–9; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 214–18; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 136–37.

42. Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1951; *Gadsden Times*, 1, 2, and 3 April and 4 May 1951; Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 114–17; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 218–19.

43. *Gadsden Times*, 4, 5, and 7 May 1951; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 137–38.

44. *Gadsden Times*, 9, 13, 22, 28, and 30 May 1951.

45. Minchin, *What Do We Need a Union For*, 155–76, quoted selection from 167; Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 140–48, 160–61; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 218–32, 355.

46. Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1957; Cobb, *Selling the South*, 268.

47. Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1951, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957; Rosen, *Making Sweatshops*, 6–7, 13–15, 27–47, 77–85; David Carlton and Peter Coclanis, "Southern Textiles in Global Context" in Delfino and Gillespie, eds., *Global Perspectives*, 169–71; Silver, *Forces of Labor*, 87–89; Ferleger and Mandle, "Preface," in Ferleger and Mandle, eds., *Dimensions of Globalization*, 11–13; Clark, *Like Night and Day*, 89–99; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 241–49; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 279–80.

48. Dwight Manufacturing Company Chronology, Gadsden Industries (Textiles) Vertical File. Gadsden Public Library, Gadsden, Ala.; Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1958; *Gadsden Times*, 30 May 1958 and 19 February 1959. On the sale of company houses and the post–World War II decline of the textile mill village, see Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 262–77; and Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*, 145–50.

49. Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1958; *Gadsden Times*, 6 March 1959.

50. Cone issued his closure threat in a letter to TWUA Local 576, published in the *Gadsden Times* on 6 March 1959. *Gadsden Times*, 6 and 8 March 1959; George Allen Smith, president, to the Members of the Gadsden and Etowah County Chamber of Commerce, 9 March 1959, Gadsden Industries (Textiles) Vertical File.

51. *Gadsden Times*, 8 and 14 March 1959.

52. *Ibid.*, 16 March 1959; Burns Cox Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2. Cone's subsidiary mills included the American Spinning (Greenville, S.C.), Cliffside (Cliffside, N.C.), Edna (Reidsville, N.C.), Eno (Hillsboro, N.C.), Florence (Forest City, N.C.), Granite (Haw River, N.C.), Haynes (Avondale, N.C.), May (Newark, N.J.), Minneola (Gibsonville, N.C.), Pineville (Pineville, N.C.), Print Works (Greensboro, N.C.), Proximity (Greensboro), Revolution (Greensboro), Salisbury (Salisbury, N.C.), Tabardrey (Haw River), and White Oak (Greensboro) Plants, and the Union Bleachery (Greenville, S.C.).

53. *Gadsden Times*, 17, 19–20, 31 March, and 2, 4, 8–10, 14–15 April 1959. A showdown

similar to that at Dwight in 1959 occurred in 1958 between management and labor at the Harriet and Henderson Cotton Mills located in Henderson, N.C. which had also been organized during World War II. See Clark, *Like Night and Day*, 168–98.

54. Cone Mills, *Annual Report*, 1959; Laura Beard Interview, and "Jerry's Drugstore" Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2; TWUA, *Convention Report*, 1960, 28; *Gadsden Times*, 4 January 2000.

55. *Gadsden Times*, 6 July 1975 and 21 September 1980; Dwight Manufacturing Company Chronology, Gadsden Industries (Textiles) Vertical File; Melton Ballard Interview, Uprising of '34 Transcripts, Box 2.

Conclusion

1. *Textile Worker*, January 1928; Cobb, *Selling the South*, especially 35–63, 97–110; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 249–64; Simon, "Rethinking Why," 475–77; Cowie, *Capital Moves*, 73–98.

2. John Gaventa and Barbara Ellen Smith, "The Deindustrialization of the Textile South," in Leiter et al., eds., *Hanging by a Thread*, 182; Bluestone and Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America*, 25–27, 84–104. On post–World War II New England mill closures; management, union, and government strategies to stop them and mitigate the impact of deindustrialization on the region; and local, state, and regional economic redevelopment programs, see Hartford, *Where Is Our Responsibility*, 87–202; Daniel, *Culture of Misfortune*, 205–81; Gross, *The Course of Industrial Decline*, chapters 11–12; Saxon, "Fall River," 54–74; Koistinen, "Dealing with Deindustrialization," 201–338.

3. Cobb, *Selling the South*, 267–68; Gaventa and Smith, "The Deindustrialization of the Textile South," 181–96; Kane, *Textiles in Transition*, 139–44; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 308–11; Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy*, 190–92; Rosen, *Making Sweatshops*, 7, 15, 50, 94. For global comparisons of hourly wages paid in the textile manufacturing industry between 1975 and 1993, see ILO, *Globalization of the Footwear, Textiles, and Clothing Industries*, Table 2.1.

4. *Textile Worker*, February 1929.

5. *Transactions of the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers*, Annual Meeting, 1904, 109.

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